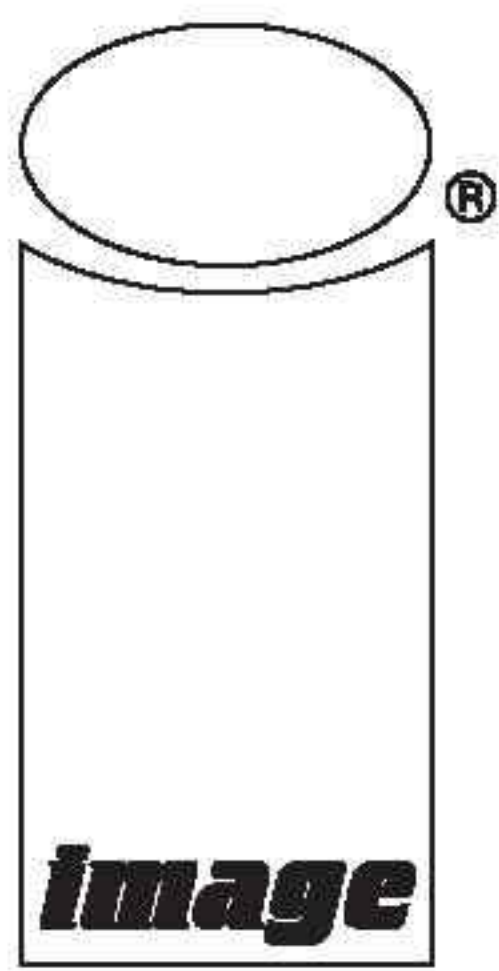




KIRKMAN • OTTLEY • CRABTREE

INVINCIBLE™

13

MAY
\$2.95
\$4.05 CAN



WY9

image[®] COMICS PRESENTS

INVINCIBLE

TM

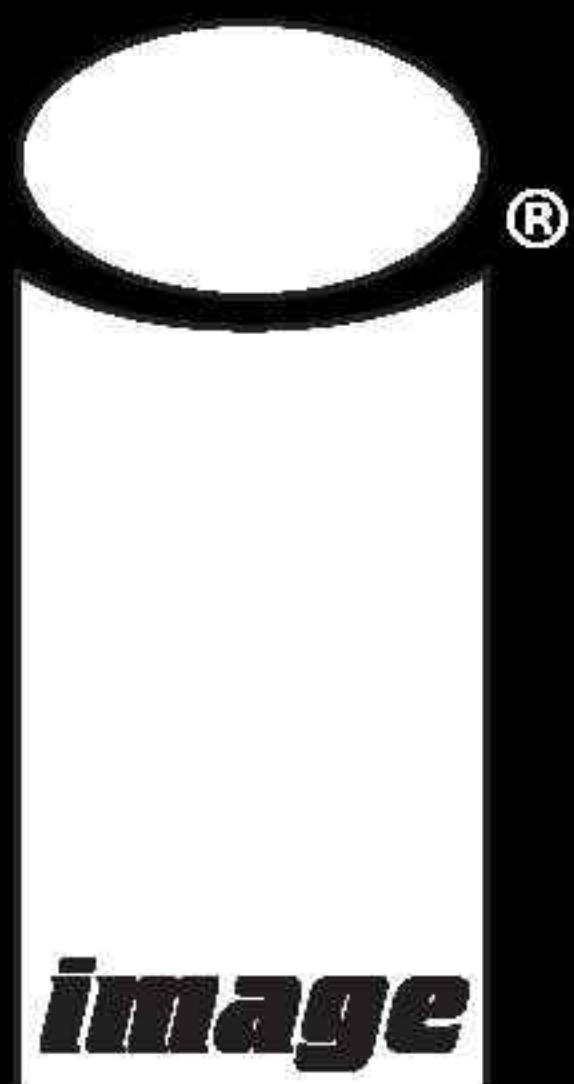
ROBERT KIRKMAN
WRITER & LETTERER

RYAN OTTLEY
PENCILER & INKER

BILL CRABTREE
COLORIST

COVER BY
RYAN OTTLEY
AND BILL CRABTREE

INVINCIBLE CREATED BY
ROBERT KIRKMAN
AND CORY WALKER



FOR IMAGE COMICS:

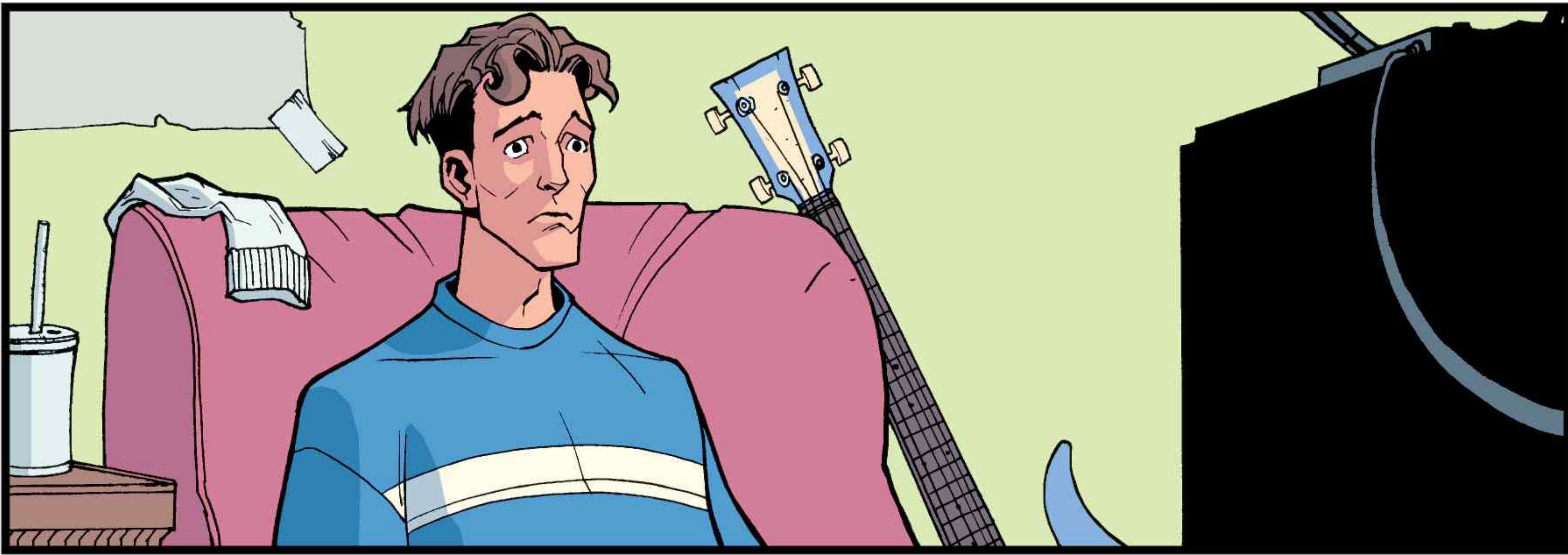
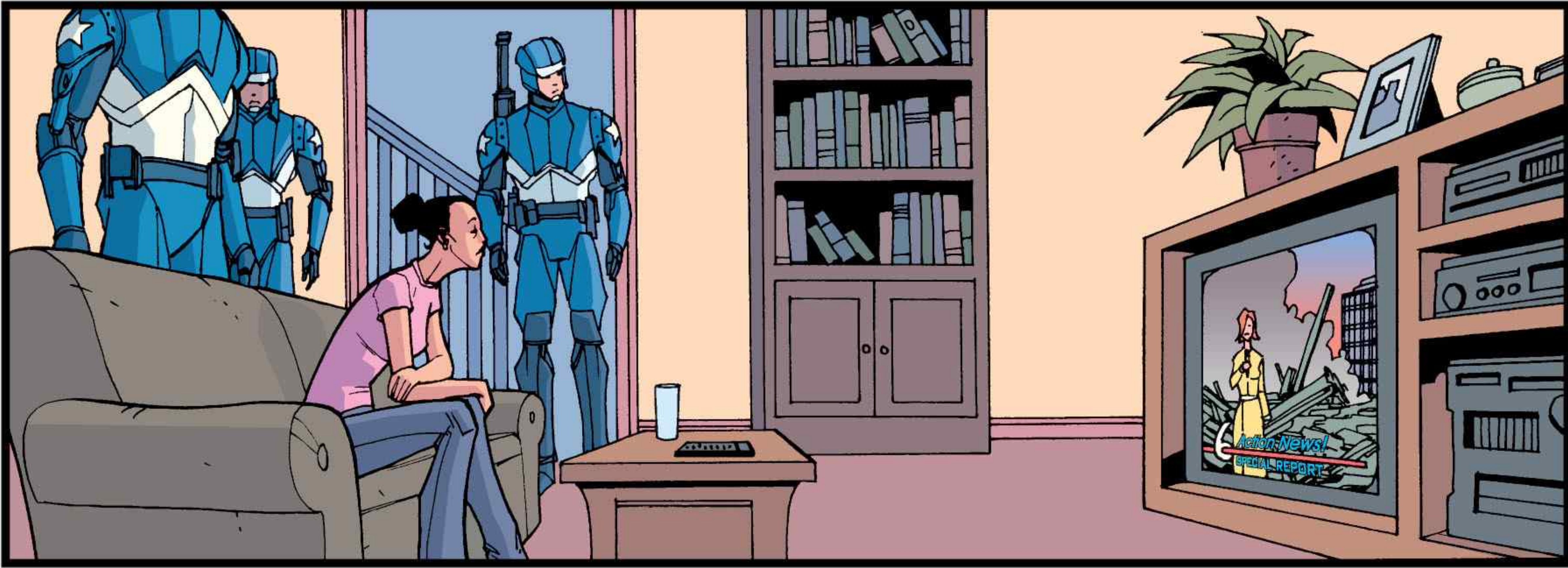
Erik Larsen - Publisher
Todd McFarlane - President
Marc Silvestri - CEO
Jim Valentino - Vice-President

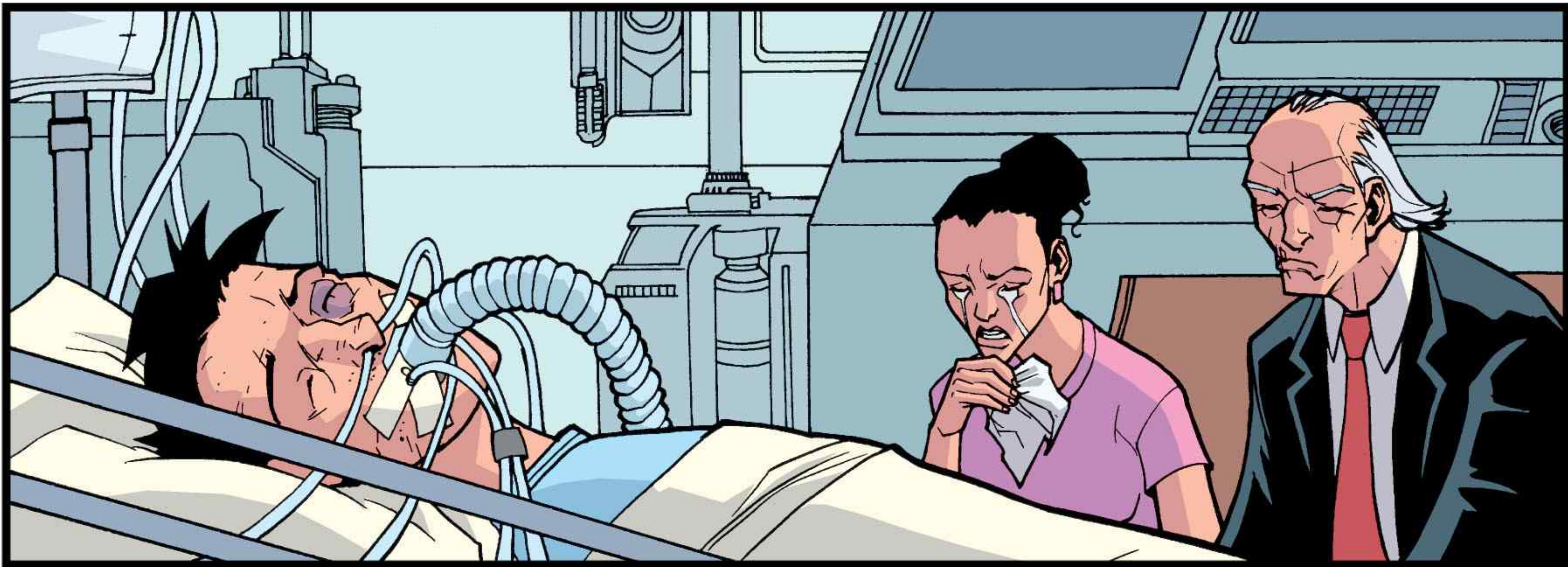
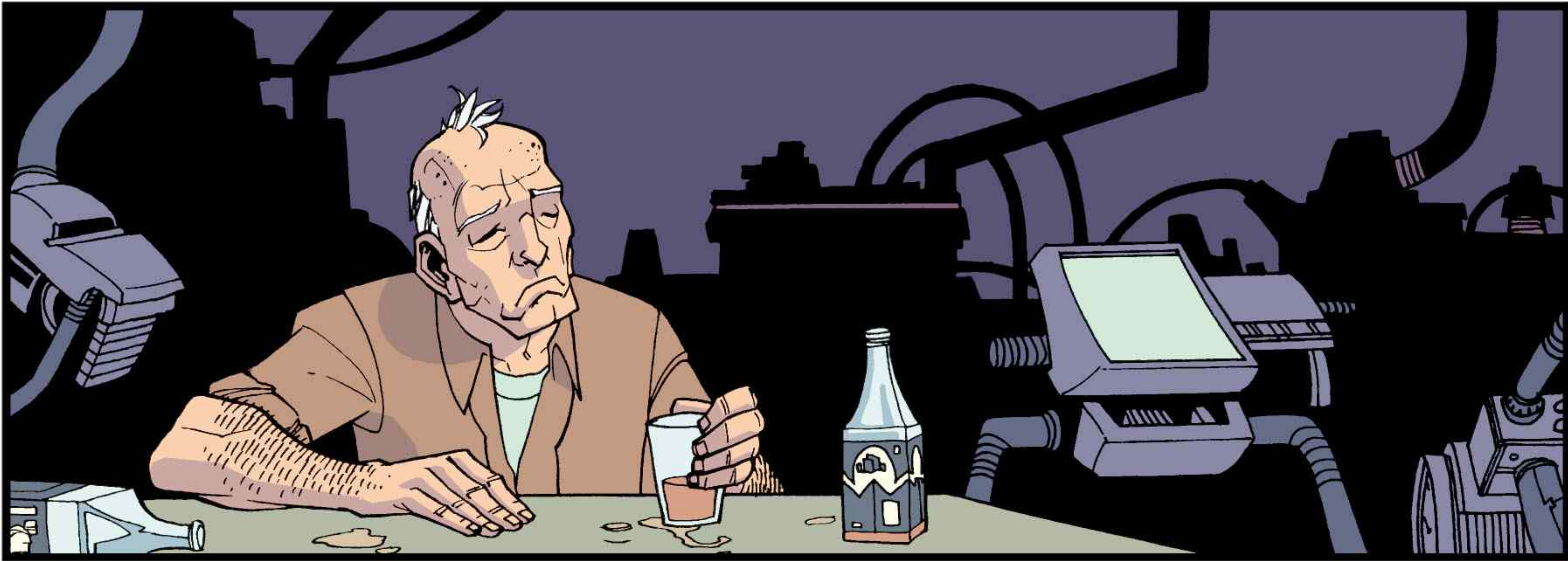
Eric Stephenson - Managing Editor
Brett Evans - Production Manager
Cindie Espinoza - Controller

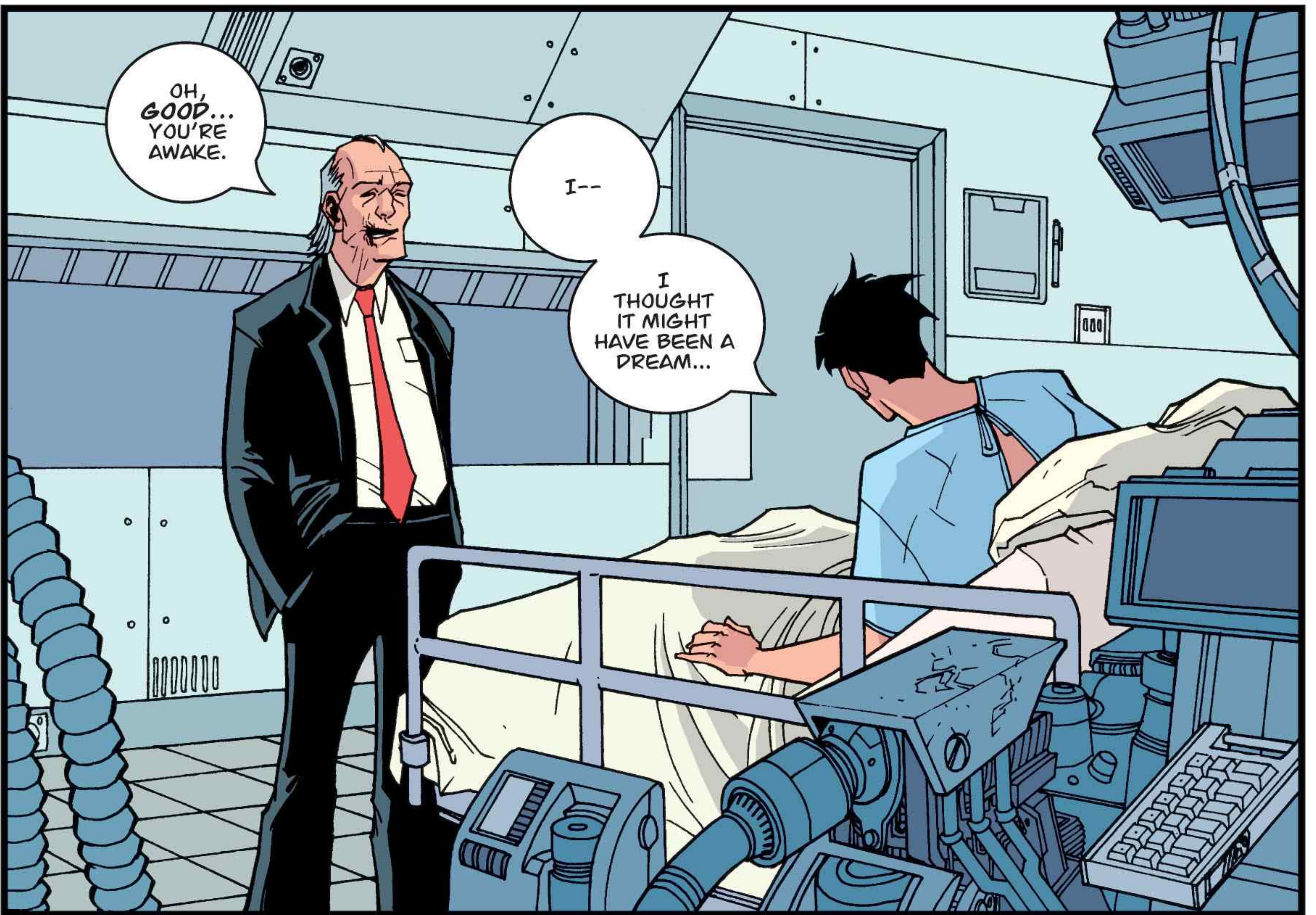
B. Clay Moore - Public Relations & Marketing Coordinator
Allen Hui - Web Developer
Jon Malin - Production Assistant
Tim Hegarty - Booktrade/International Rights

INVINCIBLE VOL. I #13. MAY 2004. FIRST PRINTING. An Image Comics Group title published by Image Comics 1071 N. Batavia St. Ste A, Orange, CA 92867. Image and its logos are © and © 2004 Image Comics, Inc. All rights reserved. INVINCIBLE is TM and © Robert Kirkman and Cory Walker, 2004. All rights reserved. Any similarities to persons living or dead is purely coincidental. With the exception of artwork used for review purposes, none of the contents of this publication may be reprinted without the permission of Robert Kirkman and Cory Walker. Publisher and creators assume no responsibility for unsolicited materials.
PRINTED IN USA





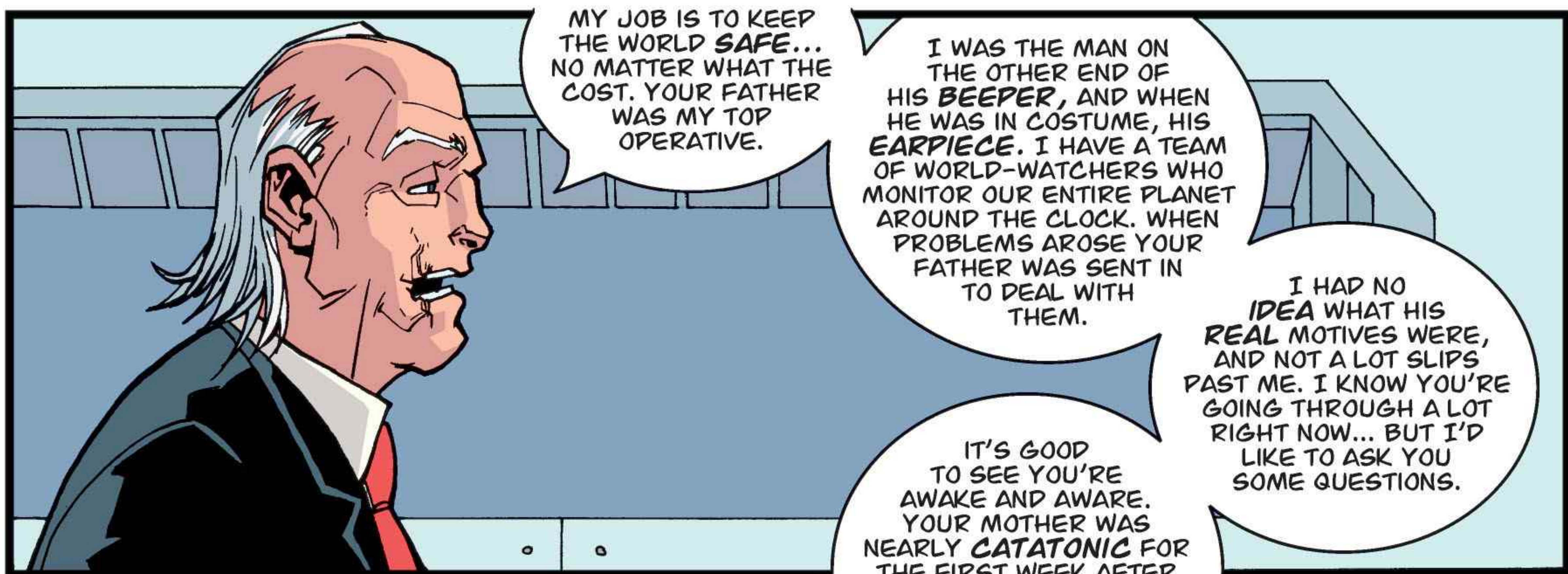






MY NAME IS **CECIL STEPMAN**. YOU DON'T KNOW **ME** BUT I KNEW YOUR **FATHER** VERY WELL... OR SO I THOUGHT.

I'M SO HIGH RANKED IN THE U.S. GOVERNMENT I DON'T EVEN **HAVE** A RANK. I'M SO FAR ABOVE THE HEAD OF THE **CIA** HE DOESN'T EVEN KNOW I **EXIST**. I'M ALSO IN CHARGE OF THE **GUARDIANS OF THE GLOBE** IN THEIR NEW GOVERNMENT-SANCTIONED ENTITY, AND THE NEWLY REINSTATED **GUARD** ORGANIZATION.



MY JOB IS TO KEEP THE WORLD **SAFE**... NO MATTER WHAT THE COST. YOUR FATHER WAS MY TOP OPERATIVE.

I WAS THE MAN ON THE OTHER END OF HIS **BEEPER**, AND WHEN HE WAS IN COSTUME, HIS **EARPIECE**. I HAVE A TEAM OF WORLD-WATCHERS WHO MONITOR OUR ENTIRE PLANET AROUND THE CLOCK. WHEN PROBLEMS AROSE YOUR FATHER WAS SENT IN TO DEAL WITH THEM.

I HAD NO **IDEA** WHAT HIS **REAL** MOTIVES WERE, AND NOT A LOT SLIPS PAST ME. I KNOW YOU'RE GOING THROUGH A LOT RIGHT NOW... BUT I'D LIKE TO ASK YOU SOME QUESTIONS.

IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU'RE AWAKE AND AWARE. YOUR MOTHER WAS NEARLY **CATATONIC** FOR THE FIRST WEEK AFTER THE EVENT... SHE'S STILL NOT ALTOGETHER THERE, BUT SHE'S GETTING **BETTER**.



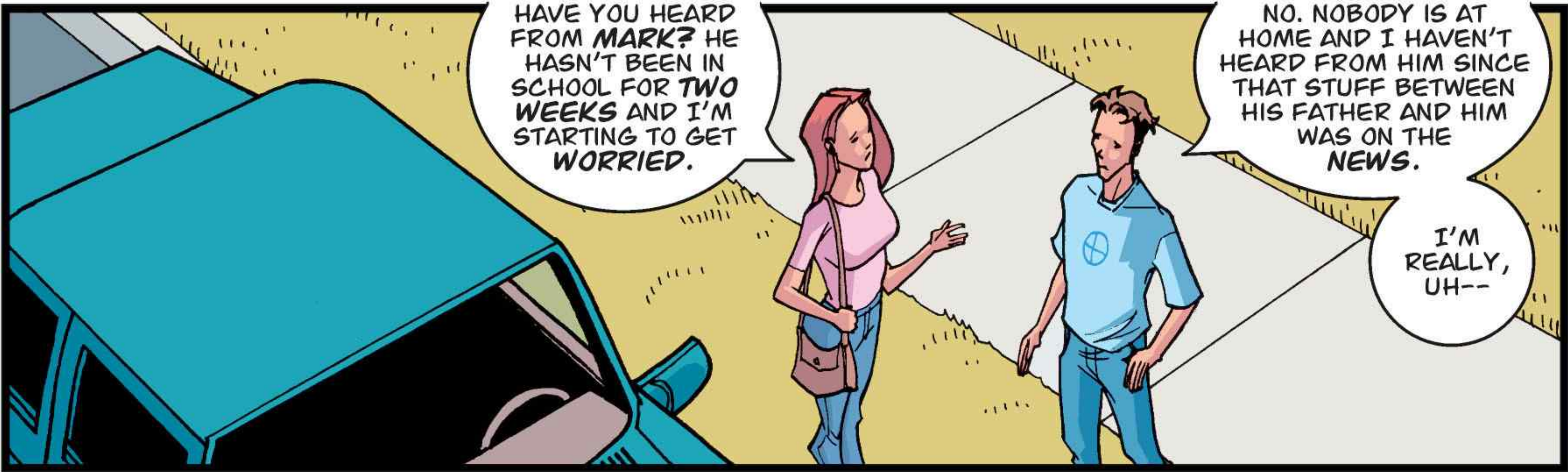
NOW... IF YOU'LL JUST--

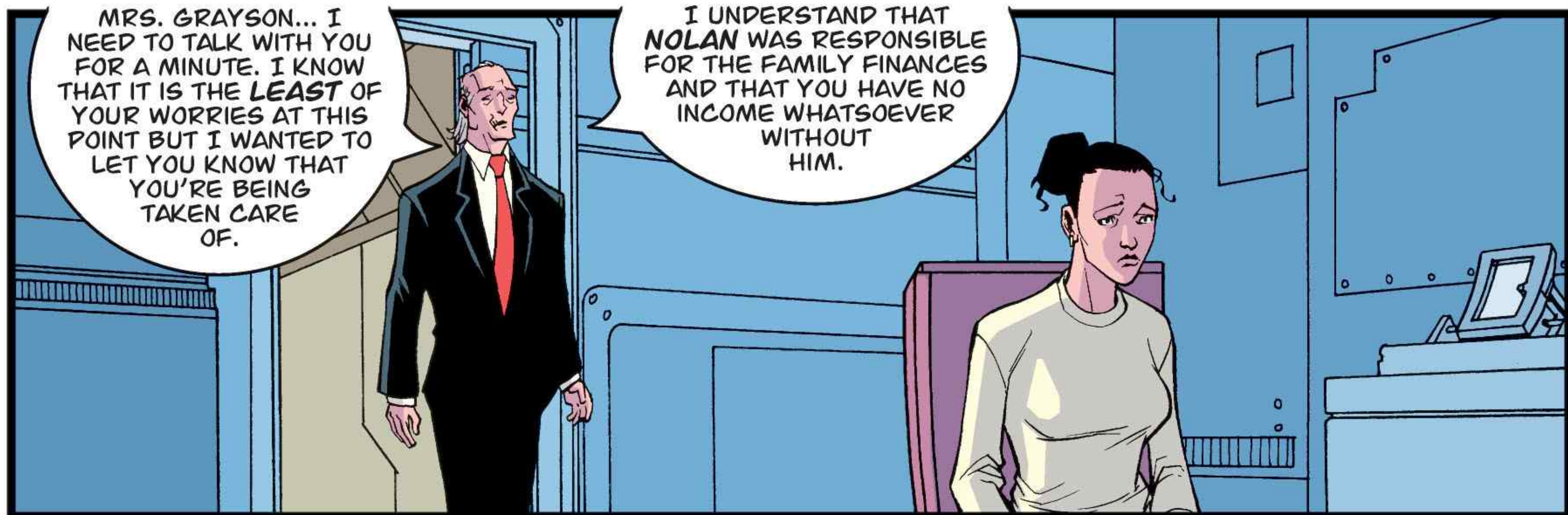
OH.



ANOTHER TIME THEN.

SORRY TO BOTHER.





MRS. GRAYSON... I NEED TO TALK WITH YOU FOR A MINUTE. I KNOW THAT IT IS THE **LEAST** OF YOUR WORRIES AT THIS POINT BUT I WANTED TO LET YOU KNOW THAT YOU'RE BEING TAKEN CARE OF.

I UNDERSTAND THAT **NOLAN** WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FAMILY FINANCES AND THAT YOU HAVE NO INCOME WHATSOEVER WITHOUT HIM.



AS FAR AS THE **PUBLIC** IS CONCERNED YOUR HUSBAND **DIED** IN A HORRIBLE CAR CRASH LAST WEEK. WE WANTED TO **PRESERVE** HIS SECRET IDENTITY AND KEEP YOU AND MARK **SAFE**.

I HAVE THE POWER TO MANIPULATE THE BUYING TRENDS OF THE PUBLIC, I CAN ENSURE THAT YOU WILL HAVE A STEADY, **SUBSTANTIAL** INCOME FOR THE REMAINDER OF YOUR LIFE.

NOLAN GRAYSON, THE AUTHOR, HAS BECOME AN INTERNATIONAL **SUPERSTAR** AFTER HIS DEATH. HIS BOOKS ALWAYS DID SELL WELL ENOUGH TO PROVIDE YOUR FAMILY WITH A DECENT INCOME. SINCE HIS DEATH... ALL OF HIS BOOKS HAVE GONE INTO **THIRD** PRINTINGS IN LESS THAN A WEEK.



A **PROXY** HAS ATTENDED A FAUX FUNERAL, AND BEEN INTERVIEWED BY THE PRESS. DO NOT BE ALARMED IF YOU SEE YOURSELF ON THE NEWS. OUR **HOLOGRAPHICS** DIVISION IS SECOND TO **NONE**.

THIS HAS BEEN DONE TO ENSURE THAT WHEN YOU ARE **READY**... YOU AND YOUR SON CAN RETURN TO YOUR **HOME** AND RESUME YOUR DAILY LIVES... WITH AS LITTLE **ADDITIONAL** PROBLEMS TO DEAL WITH AS POSSIBLE.

I KNOW THIS IS ALL A LITTLE **OVERWHELMING** AND I APOLOGIZE FOR ALL THAT'S GONE ON... I JUST HOPE THAT I CAN **HELP** YOU IN SOME SMALL WAY--

WHY?



WHY ARE YOU **DOING** ALL THIS?

BECAUSE I FEEL **RESPONSIBLE** FOR YOUR HUSBAND'S ACTIONS. HE WAS DOING **ALL** THIS RIGHT UNDER MY **NOSE**... AND I **NEVER** SAW IT.

I WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO **LIVE** WITH MYSELF IF I DIDN'T DO **EVERYTHING** IN MY POWER TO MAKE THINGS AS RIGHT AS THEY CAN BE.

AND MY **POWER** IS VAST.



OH, GOOD... YOU'RE HERE. I DIDN'T KNOW IF YOU WOULD BE.

WE HAVE BEEN USING THIS BASE AS A TEMPORARY HEADQUARTERS UNTIL THE GOVERNMENT CAN SECURE US A MORE **SUITABLE** FACILITY.

THE FORMER GUARDIANS OF THE GLOBE HEADQUARTERS IS STILL OWNED JOINTLY BY **WAR WOMAN'S** CORPORATION AND **DARKWING'S** ESTATE.

THIS FACILITY IS STILL SUFFICIENT FOR OUR NEEDS.

ROBOT, I REALLY NEED YOUR **HELP**. INVINCIBLE HAS BEEN MISSING SINCE THAT FIGHT WITH OMNI-MAN WAS TELEVISED AND I DON'T KNOW **WHERE** HE COULD BE.

HE COULD BE DEAD! OR LYING SOMEWHERE **NEAR** DEAD.

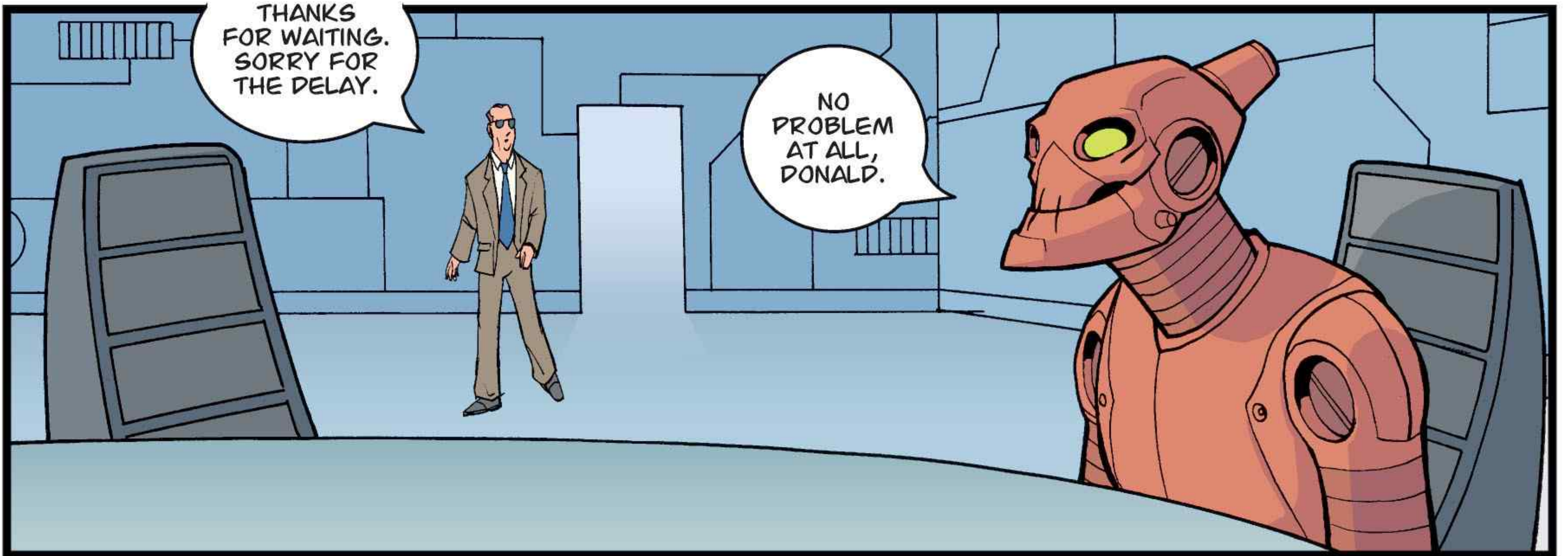
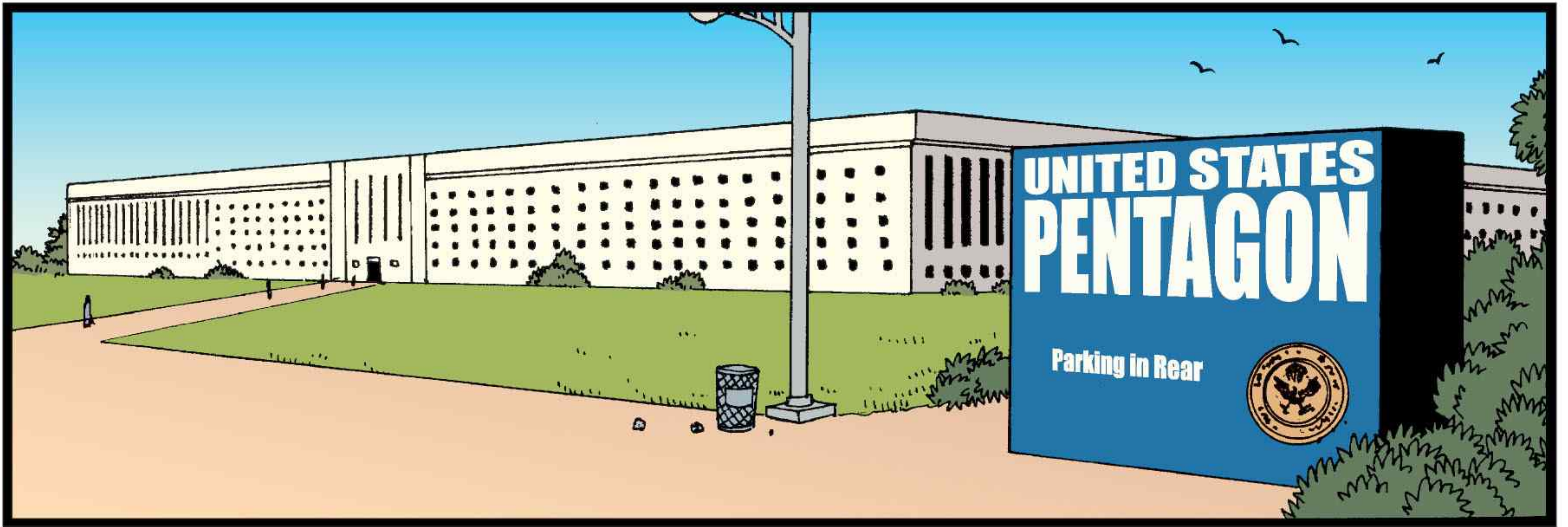
DO YOU THINK YOU COULD CALL IN A **FAVOR** FROM SOMEONE IN THE GOVERNMENT AND TRY AND FIND HIM? YOU COULD USE **SPY** SATELLITES OR SOMETHING.

I WAS NOT AWARE OF INVINCIBLE'S DISAPPEARANCE. I WILL DO MY BEST TO LOCATE HIM. YOU HAVE MY WORD.

THANKS, ROBOT. PLEASE LET ME KNOW AS SOON AS YOU FIND SOMETHING OUT.

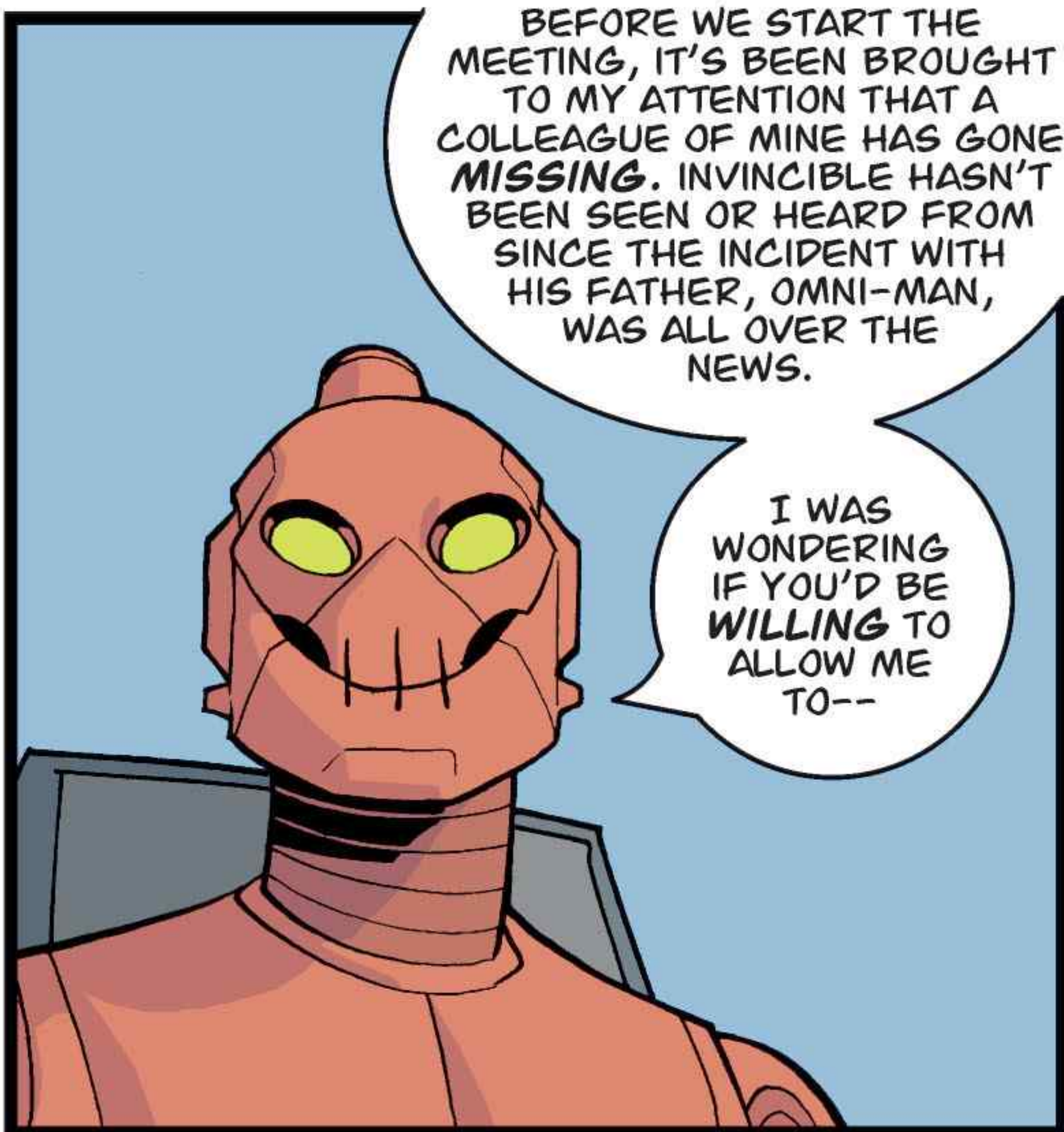
EVE, I--

WHAT GAVE YOU THE IMPRESSION THAT WE WERE **SPEAKING** AGAIN?



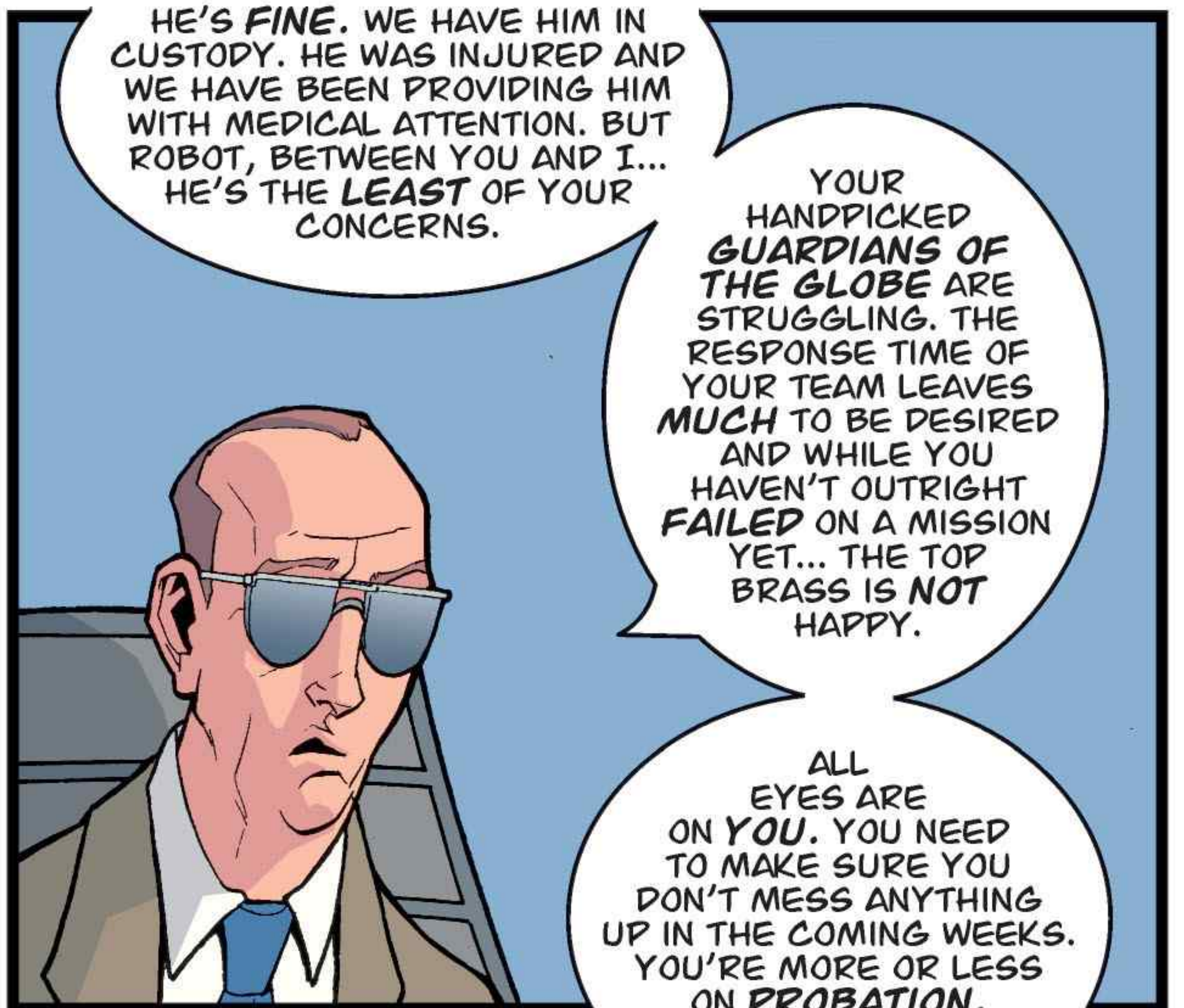
THANKS FOR WAITING. SORRY FOR THE DELAY.

NO PROBLEM AT ALL, DONALD.



BEFORE WE START THE MEETING, IT'S BEEN BROUGHT TO MY ATTENTION THAT A COLLEAGUE OF MINE HAS GONE **MISSING**. INVINCIBLE HASN'T BEEN SEEN OR HEARD FROM SINCE THE INCIDENT WITH HIS FATHER, OMNI-MAN, WAS ALL OVER THE NEWS.

I WAS WONDERING IF YOU'D BE **WILLING** TO ALLOW ME TO--



HE'S **FINE**. WE HAVE HIM IN CUSTODY. HE WAS INJURED AND WE HAVE BEEN PROVIDING HIM WITH MEDICAL ATTENTION. BUT ROBOT, BETWEEN YOU AND I... HE'S THE **LEAST** OF YOUR CONCERNS.

YOUR HANDPICKED **GUARDIANS OF THE GLOBE** ARE STRUGGLING. THE RESPONSE TIME OF YOUR TEAM LEAVES **MUCH** TO BE DESIRED AND WHILE YOU HAVEN'T OUTRIGHT **FAILED** ON A MISSION YET... THE TOP BRASS IS NOT HAPPY.

ALL EYES ARE ON **YOU**. YOU NEED TO MAKE SURE YOU DON'T MESS ANYTHING UP IN THE COMING WEEKS. YOU'RE MORE OR LESS ON **PROBATION**.



I SEE.

UNDERSTOOD.



SO IT WAS ALL OVER THE NEWS?

YEAH... TO SAY THE **LEAST**. IT'S PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE THAT YOU WERE THE SON OF OMNI-MAN. NOW THE PUBLIC SEES YOU AND OMNI-MAN IN A KNOCK-DOWN, DRAG-OUT BRAWL THAT RESULTED IN **THOUSANDS** OF LOST LIVES, AND OVER **TWICE** AS MANY INJURIES.

NOBODY KNOWS **WHY**, THOUGH. NOBODY KNOWS YOU WERE **PROTECTING** THIS PLANET FROM YOUR FATHER. NOBODY KNOWS THAT YOU WERE RISKING YOUR **LIFE** FOR THE GOOD OF US ALL.



HOW DO YOU KNOW?



YOUR FATHER'S EARPIECE, THE ONE I MENTIONED BEFORE, WORKS **BOTH** WAYS. HE COULD HEAR **ME**... I COULD HEAR **HIM**. IT PICKS UP QUITE A BIT, I COULD HEAR **YOU** AS WELL.

WE HAVE THE **WHOLE** CONVERSATION RECORDED.

COME WITH ME.



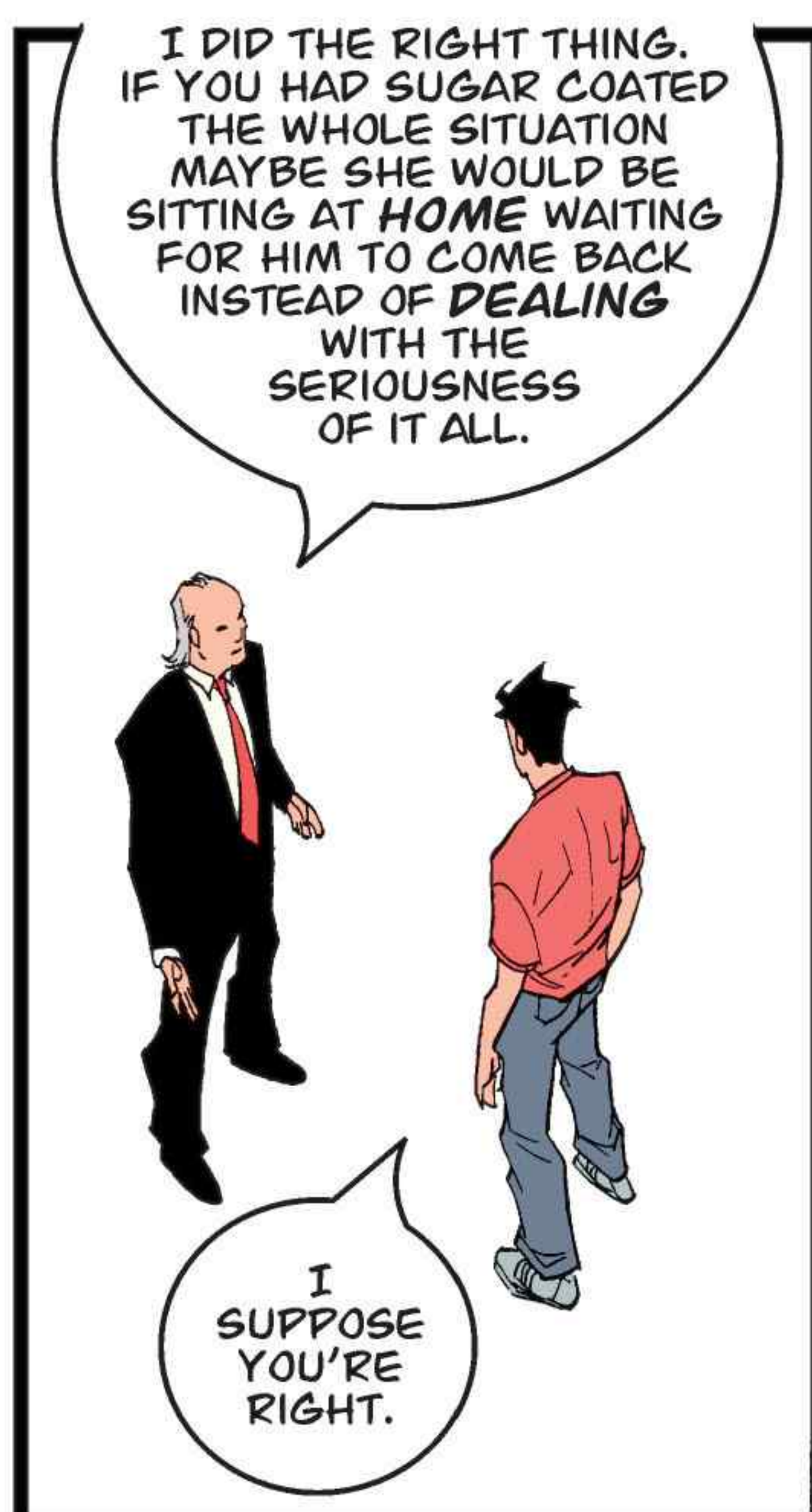
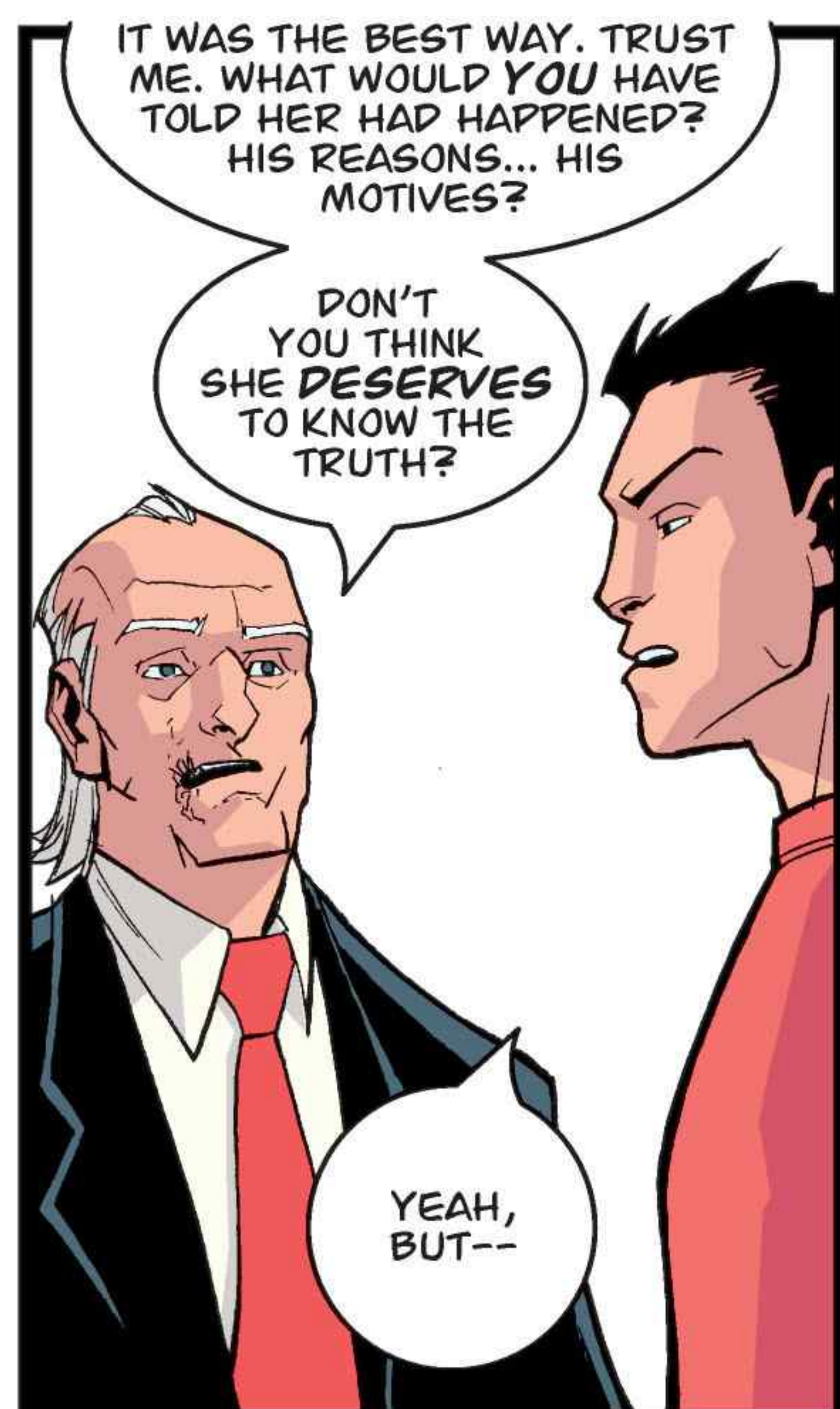
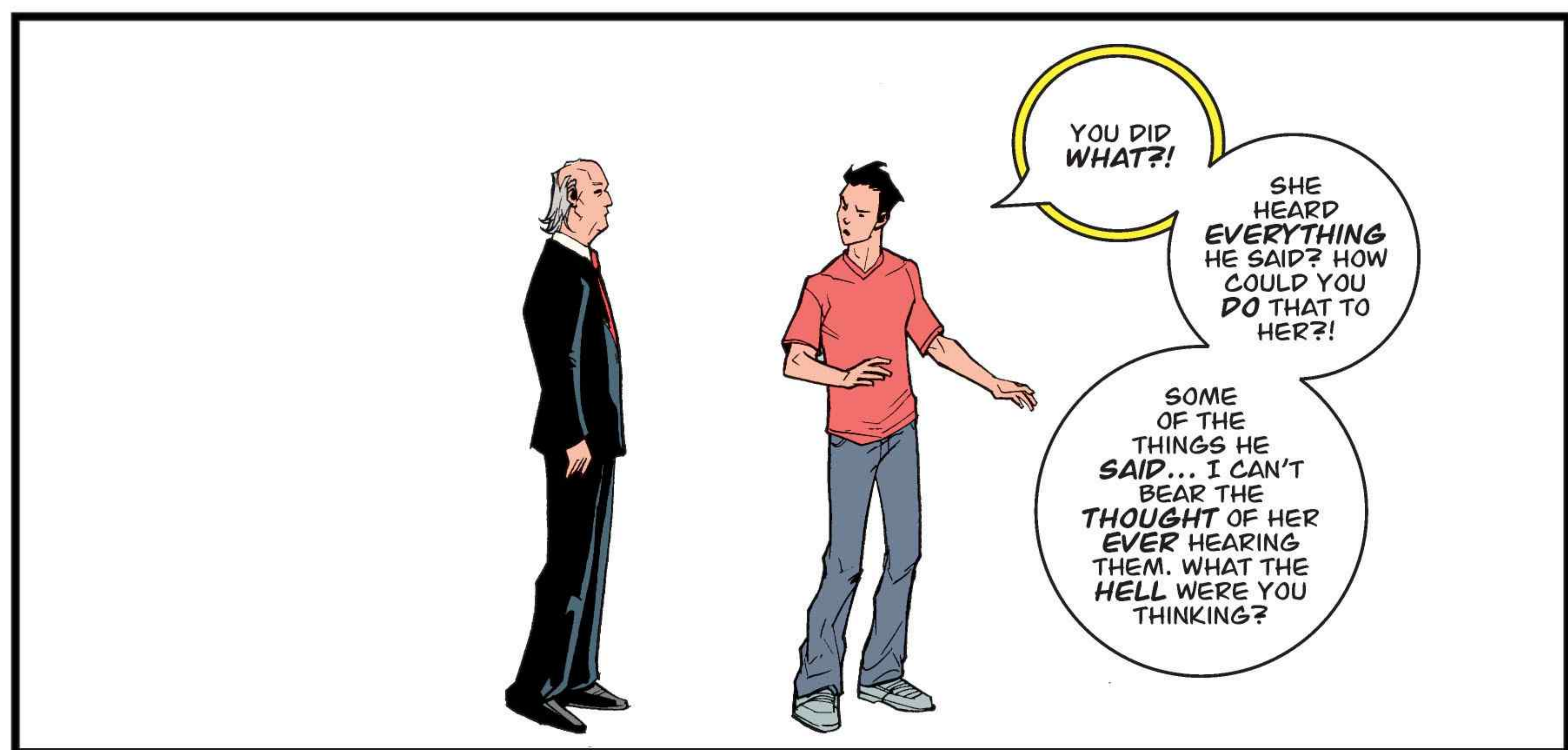
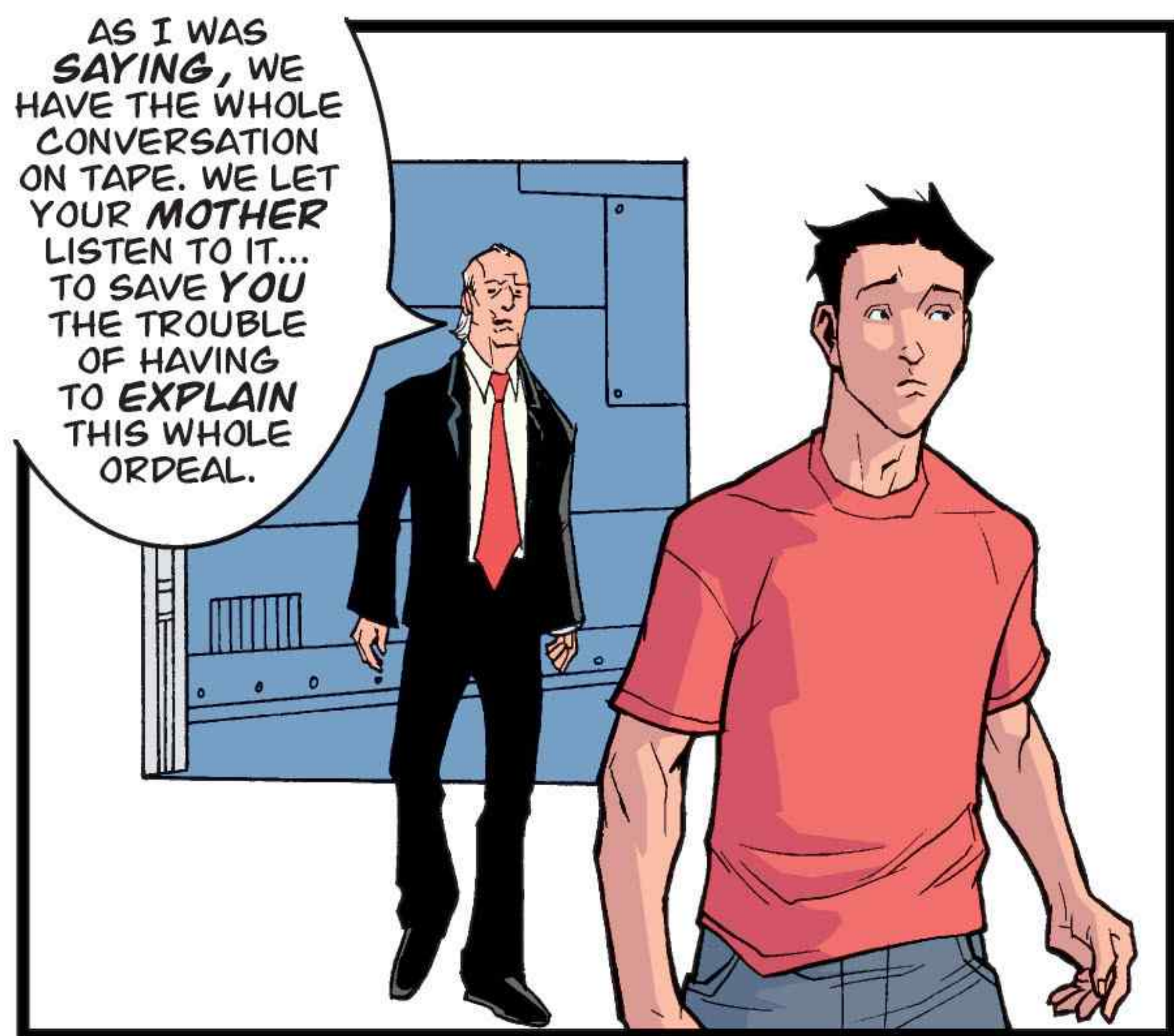
IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU UP AND AROUND. HOW DO YOU **FEEL**?

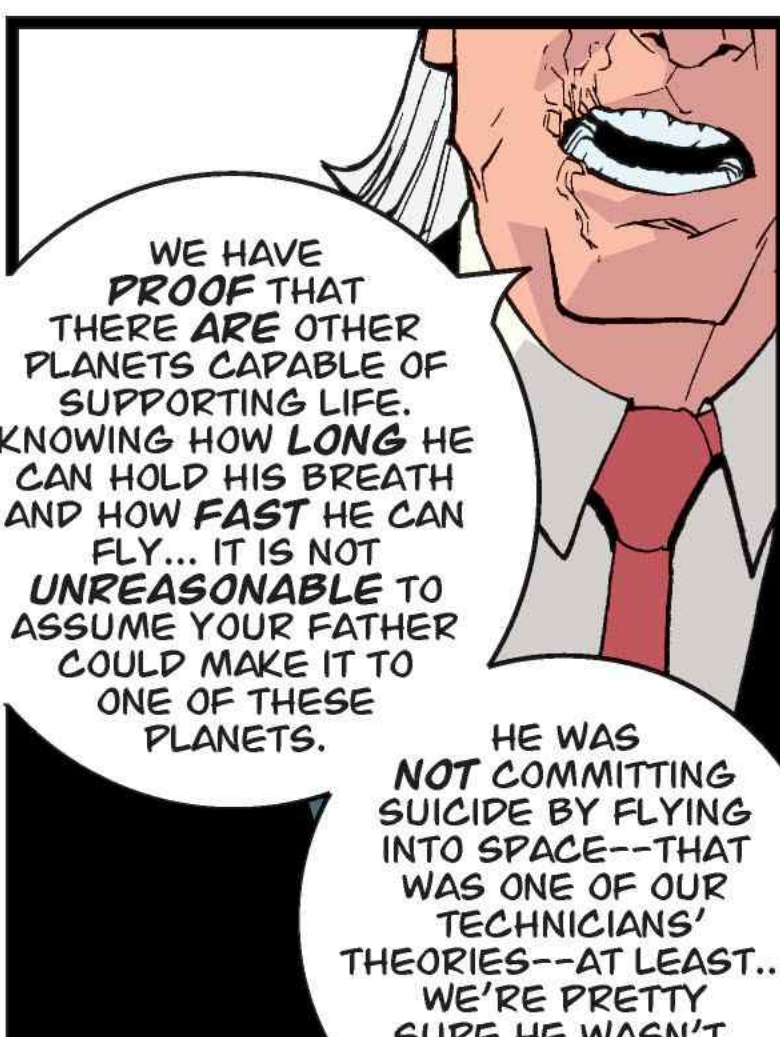
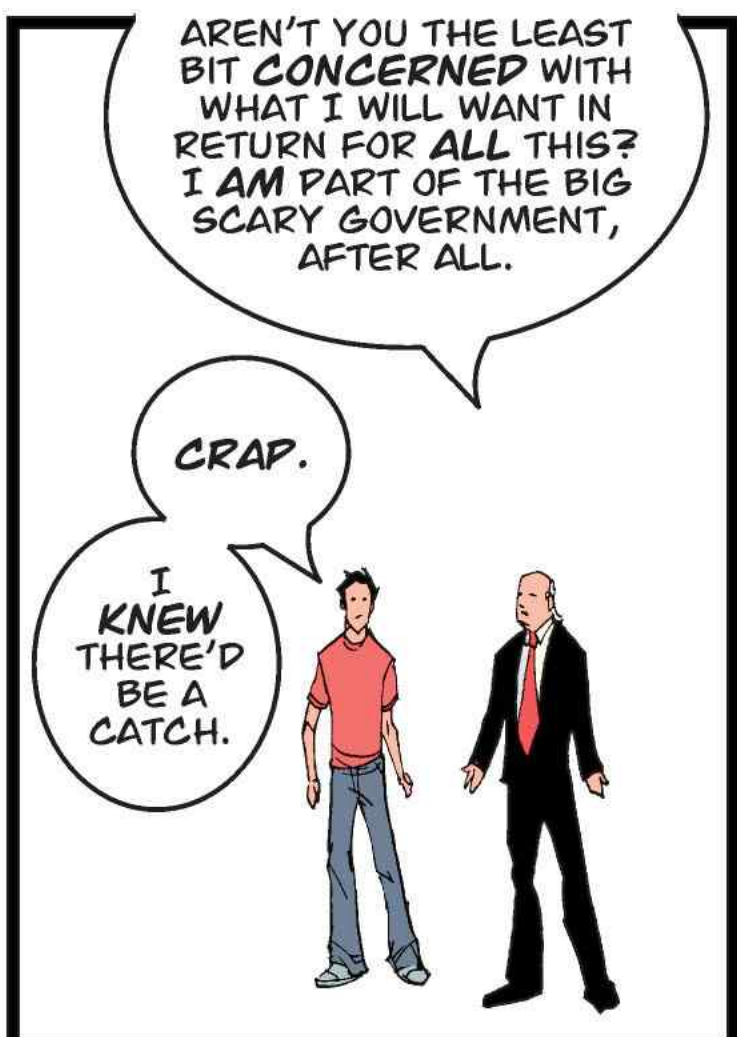
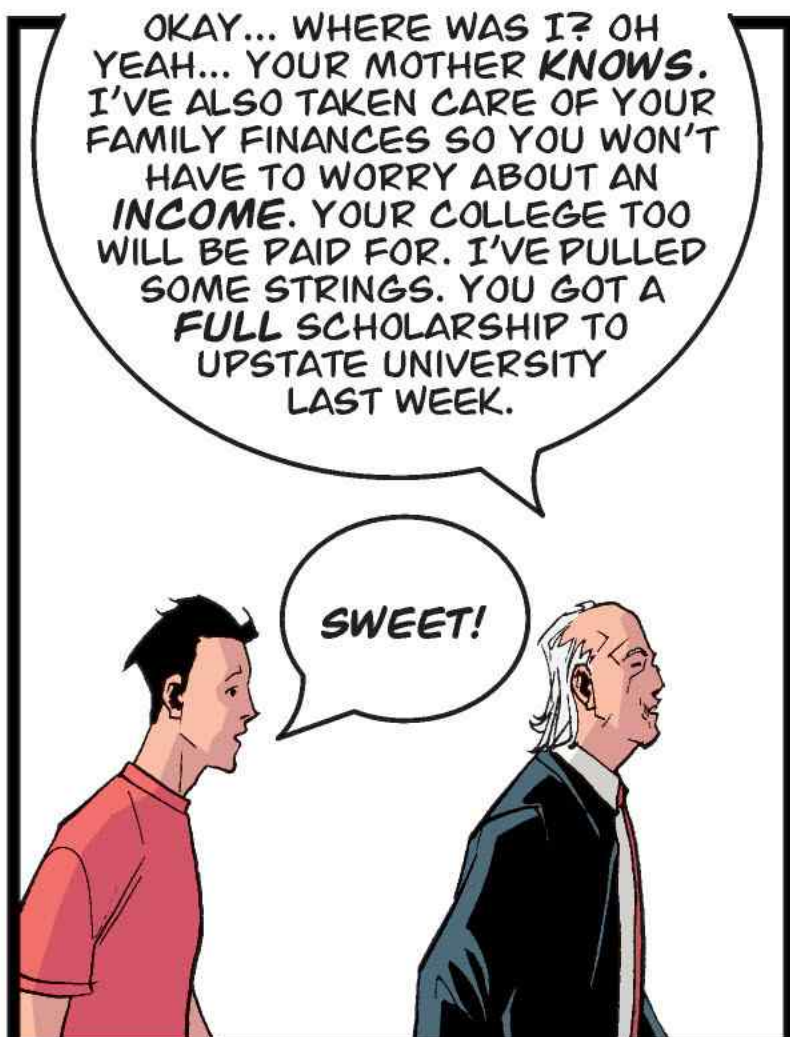
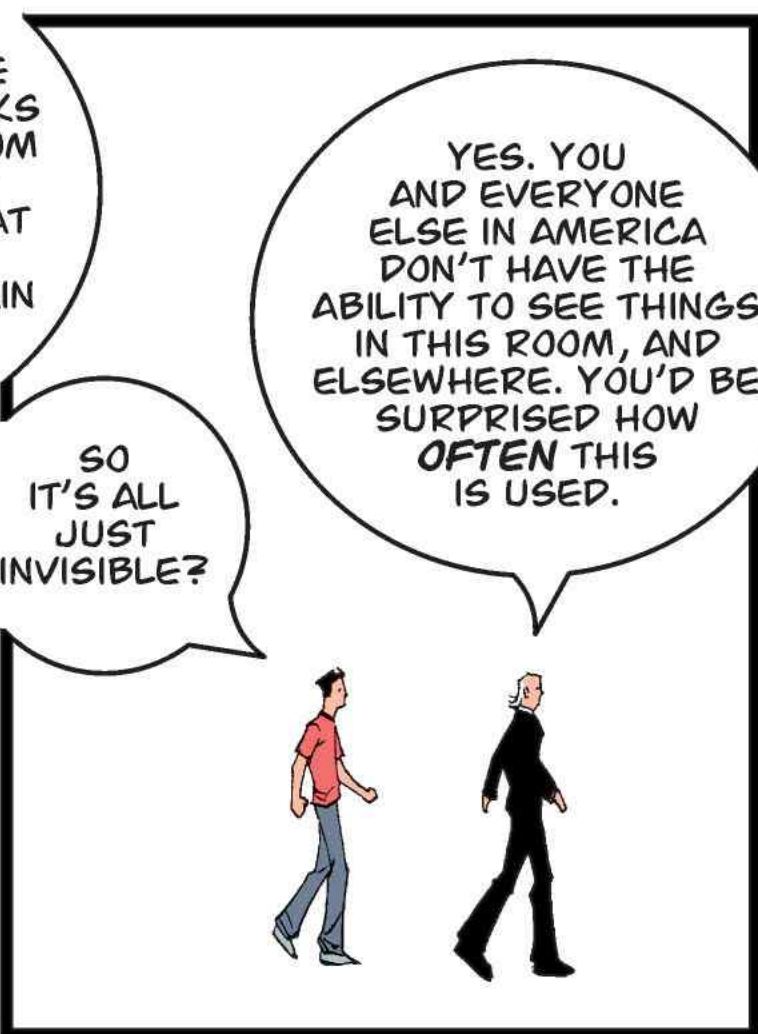
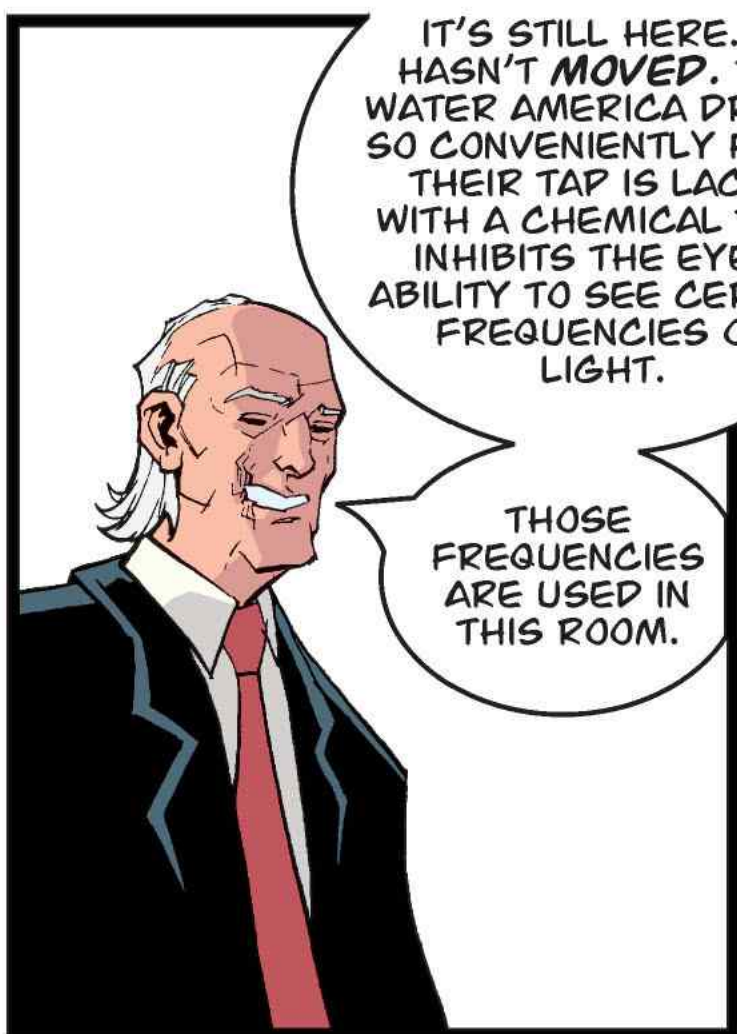
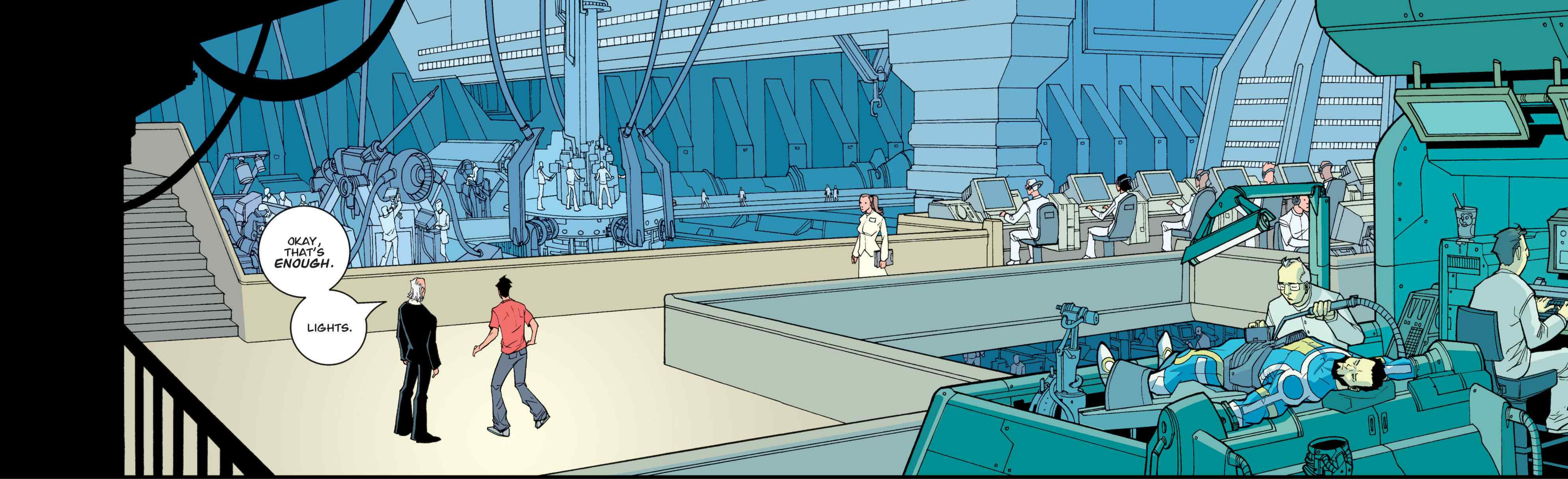
FINE. I **GUESS**.

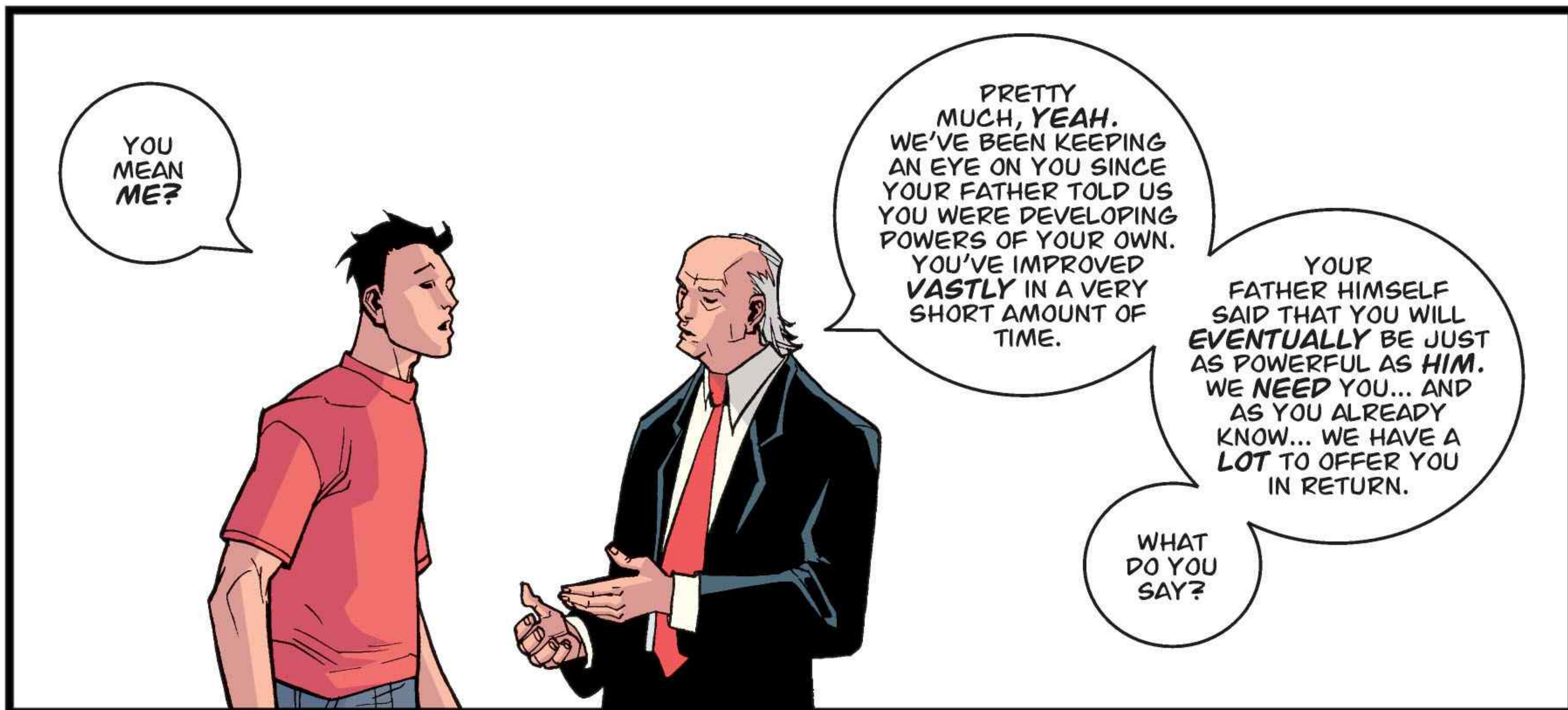


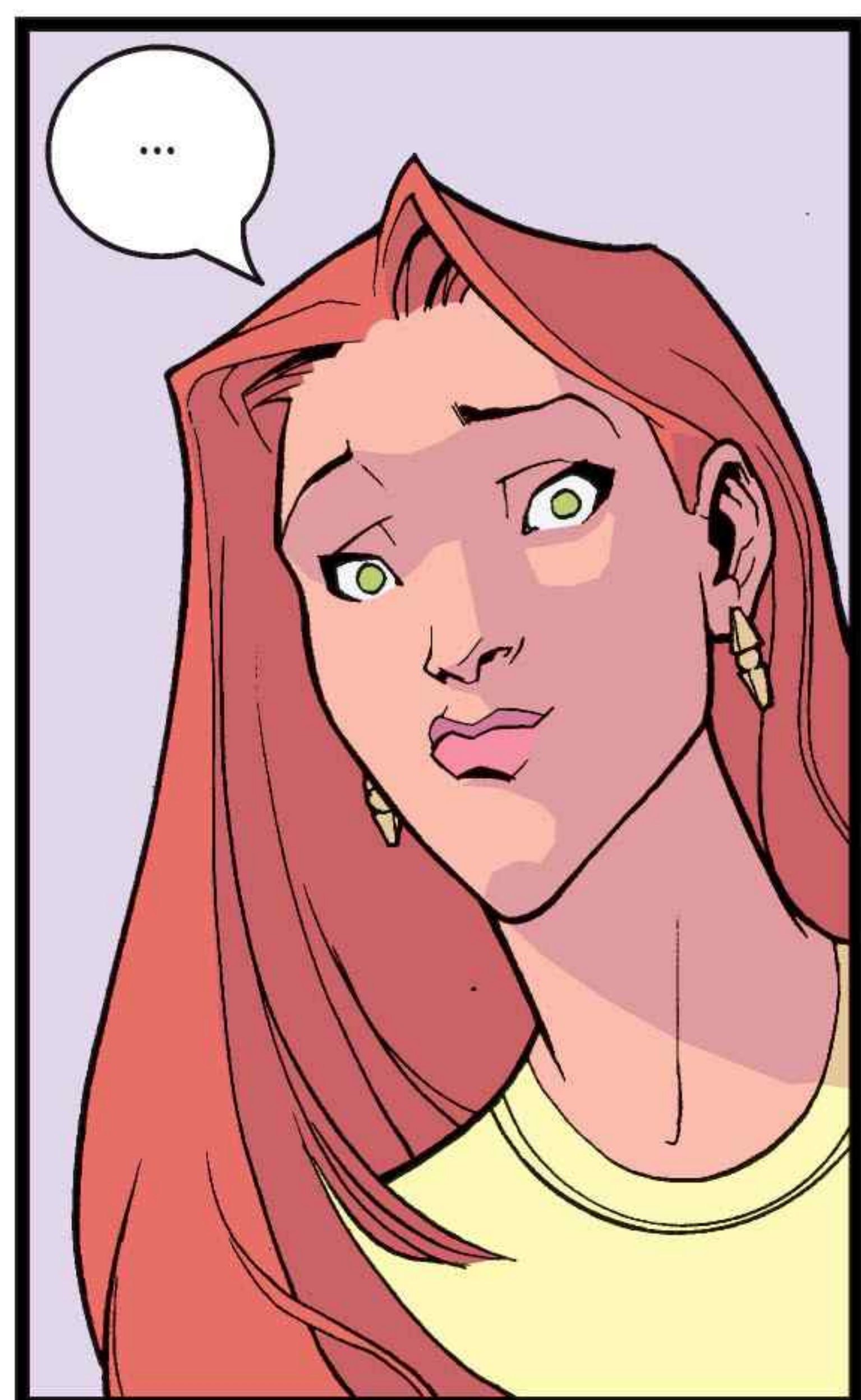
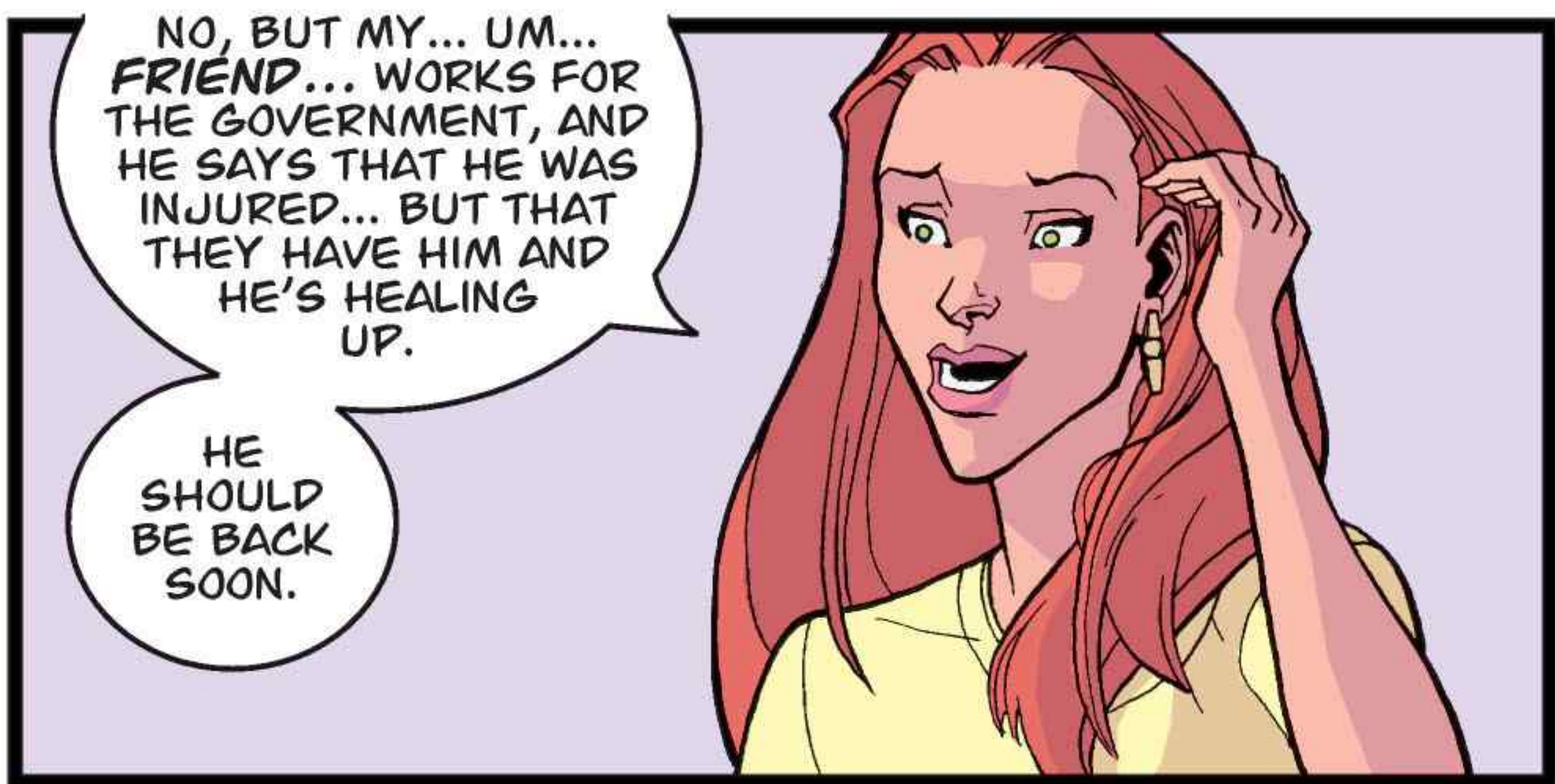
GOOD.

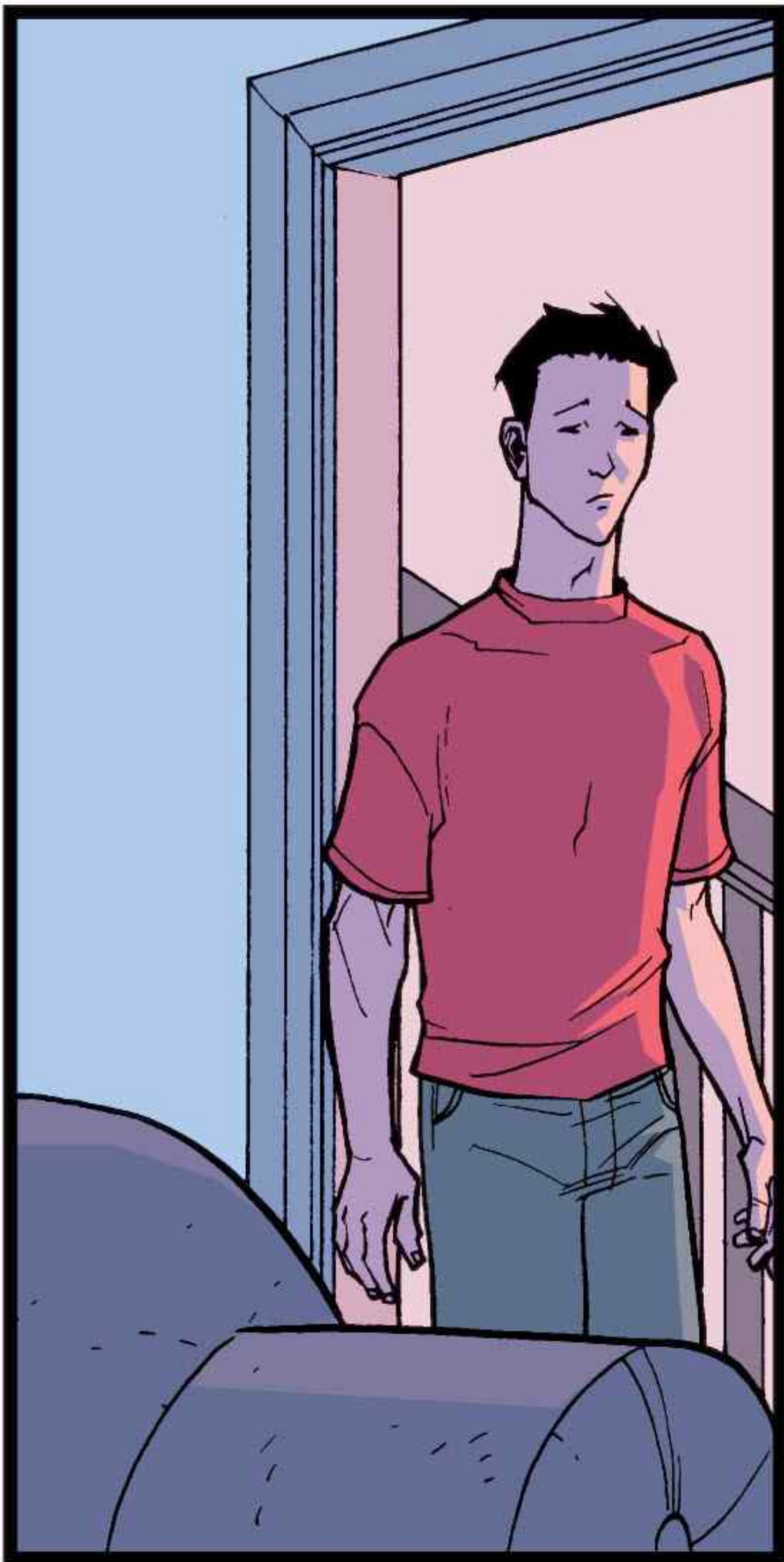
THROUGH **HERE**.



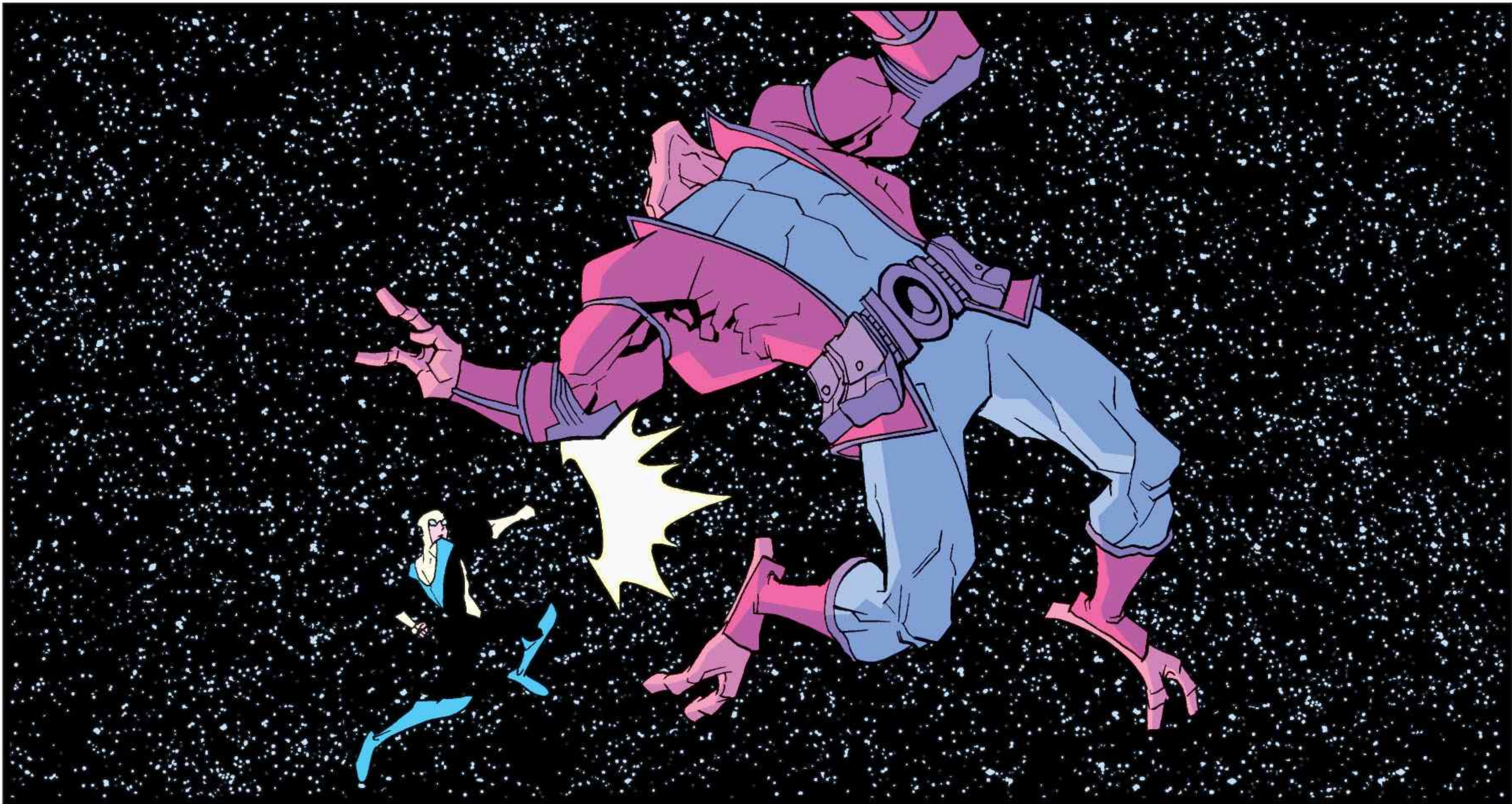
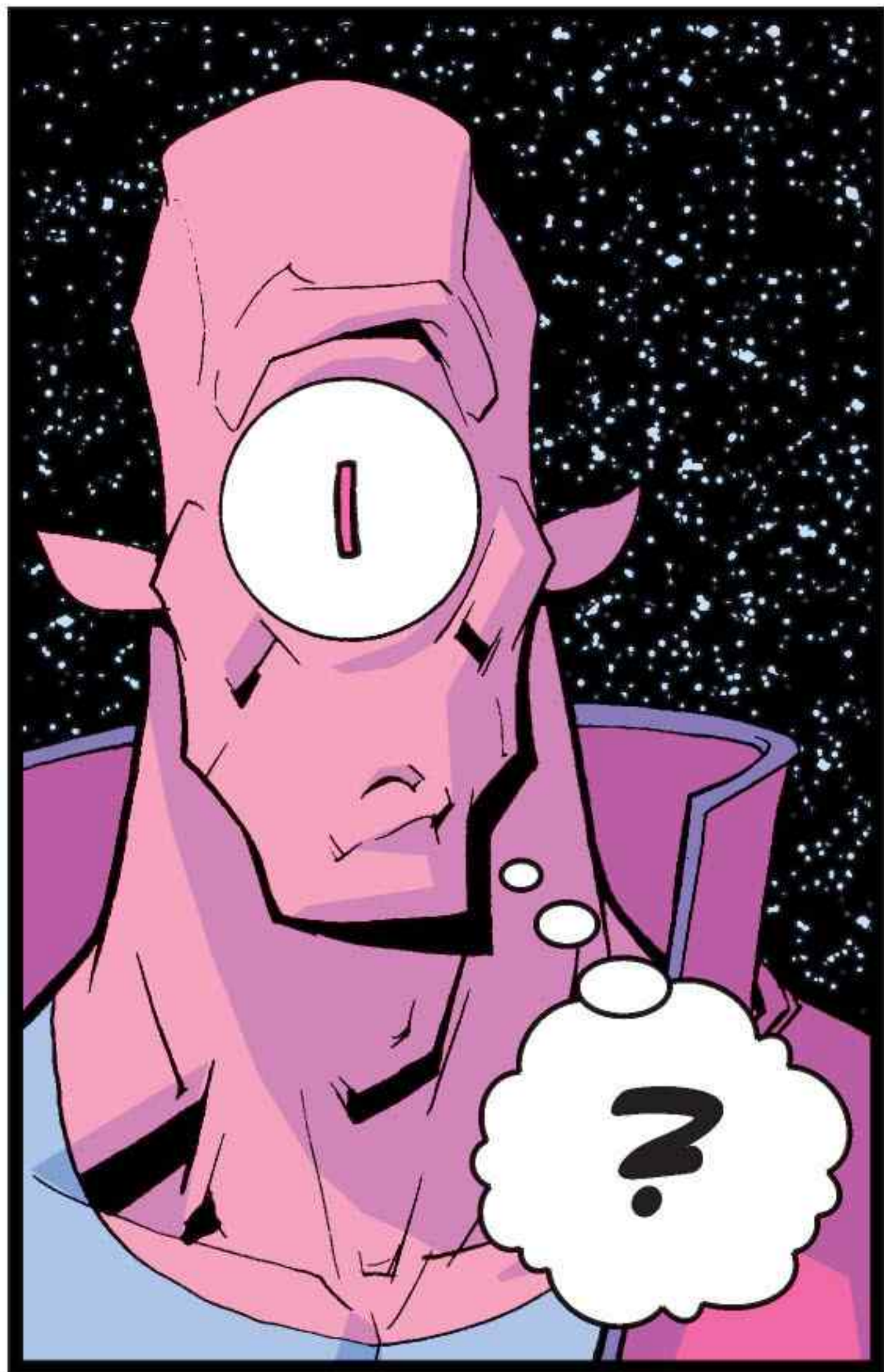
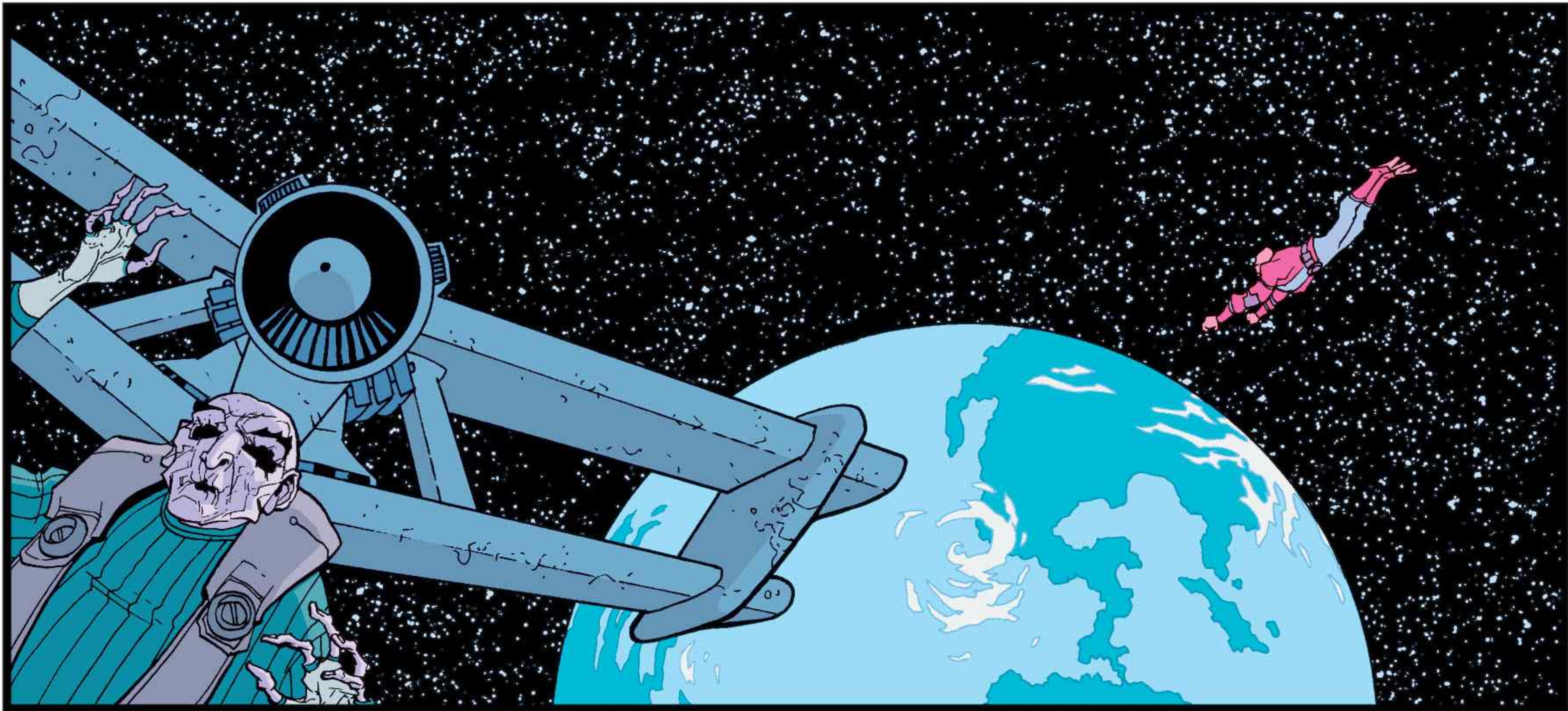
















SO...
**YOU'RE A
VILTRUMITE?**

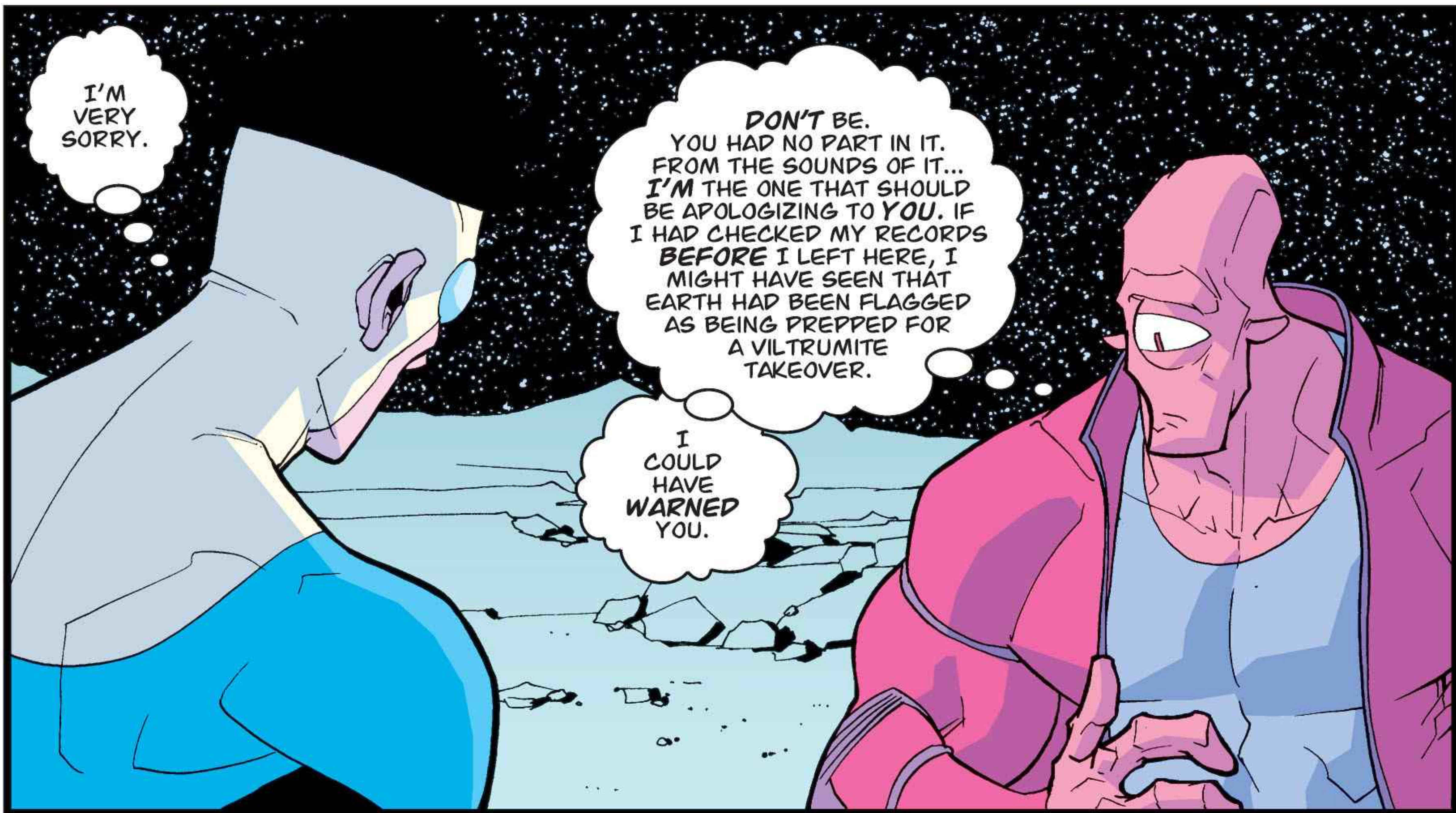
BUT
YOU DON'T
WORK FOR
THEM... AND
YOUR DAD
LEFT. HE
JUST
LEFT.



YEAH. I'VE
NEVER EVEN
BEEN TO VILTRUM.
I DON'T REALLY
KNOW MUCH ABOUT
THEM. BUT **YEAH...**
AS FAR AS WE CAN
TELL MY DAD IS
JUST **GONE**.



THAT IS **HIGHLY** UNORTHODOX
BEHAVIOR FOR A VILTRUMITE.
THEY DON'T JUST **LEAVE** THEIR
POST. THEY DESTROYED MY
HOME WORLD HUNDREDS OF
YEARS AGO. MY PEOPLE ARE
A NOMADIC SPECIES
BECAUSE WE **RESISTED**
THE VILTRUMITES WHEN
THEY ATTEMPTED TO
TAKE OVER.



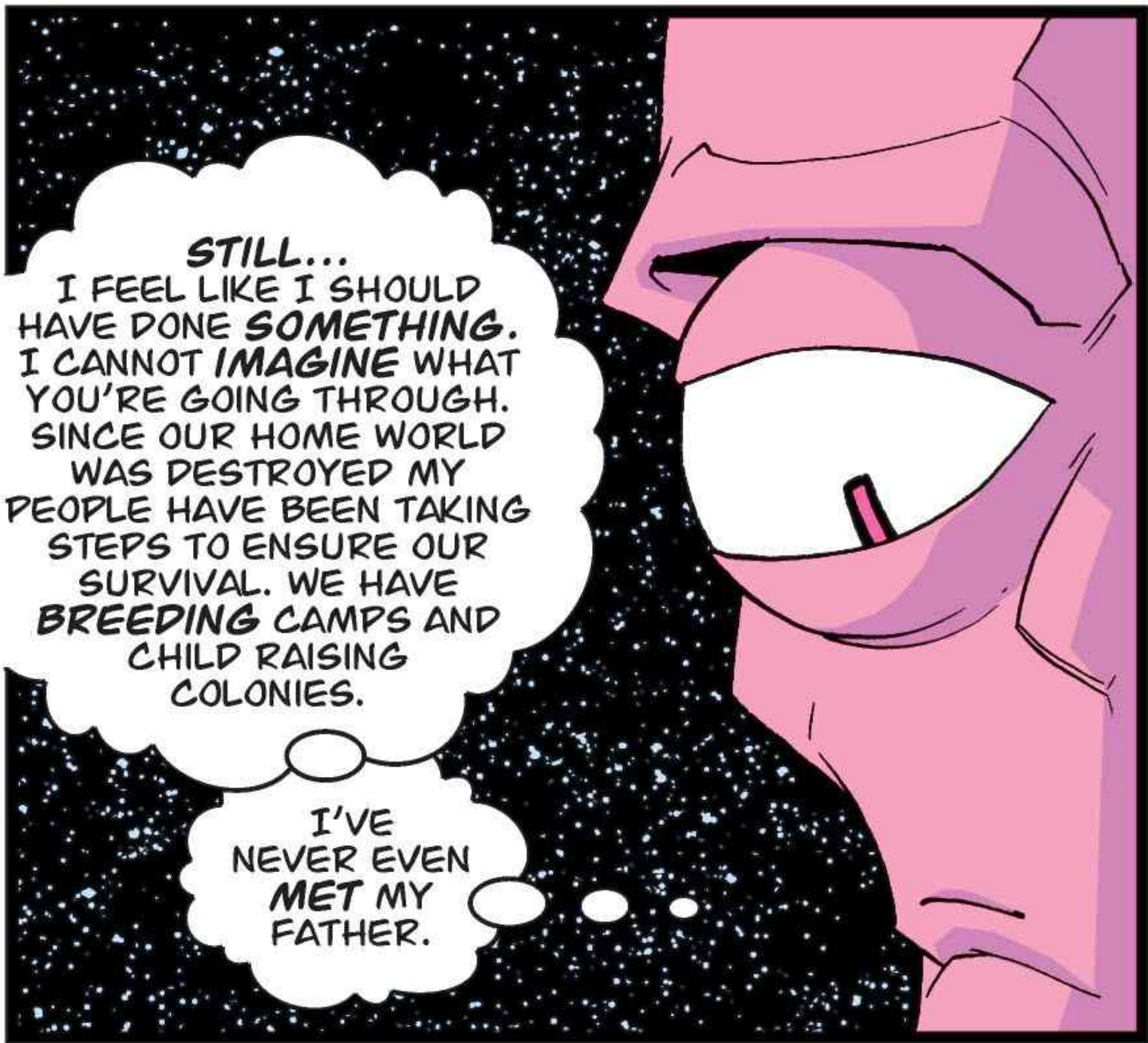
I'M
VERY
SORRY.

DON'T BE.
YOU HAD NO PART IN IT.
FROM THE SOUNDS OF IT...
I'M THE ONE THAT SHOULD
BE APOLOGIZING TO **YOU**. IF
I HAD CHECKED MY RECORDS
BEFORE I LEFT HERE, I
MIGHT HAVE SEEN THAT
EARTH HAD BEEN FLAGGED
AS BEING PREPPED FOR
A VILTRUMITE
TAKEOVER.

I
COULD
HAVE
WARNED
YOU.



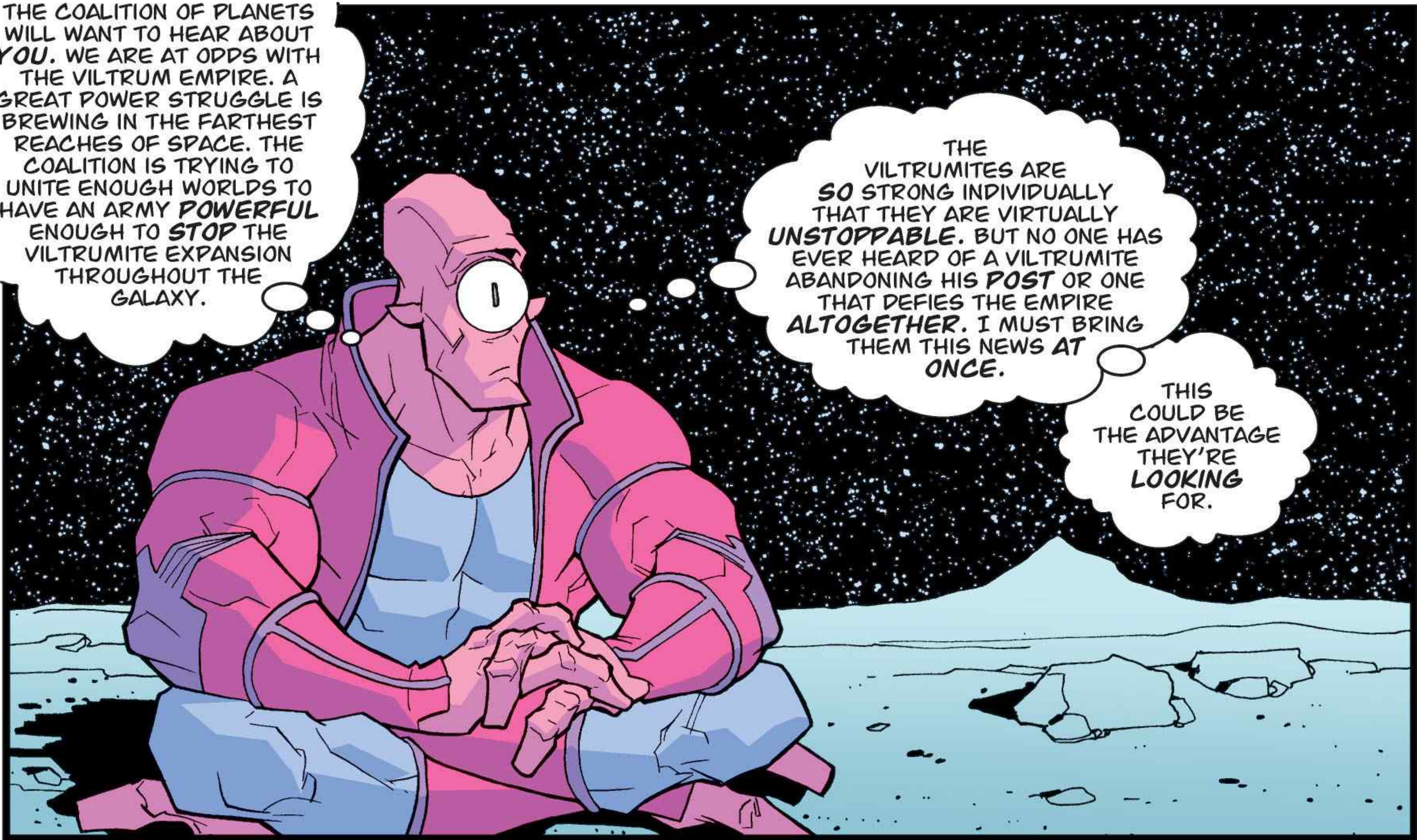
I WOULD HAVE JUST GONE TO MY DAD AND ASKED HIM ABOUT IT. WHO KNOWS HOW THINGS WOULD HAVE PLAYED OUT HAD THAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED?



STILL... I FEEL LIKE I SHOULD HAVE DONE **SOMETHING**. I CANNOT **IMAGINE** WHAT YOU'RE GOING THROUGH. SINCE OUR HOME WORLD WAS DESTROYED MY PEOPLE HAVE BEEN TAKING STEPS TO ENSURE OUR SURVIVAL. WE HAVE **BREEDING CAMPS** AND **CHILD RAISING COLONIES**.

I'VE NEVER EVEN MET MY FATHER.

THE COALITION OF PLANETS WILL WANT TO HEAR ABOUT YOU. WE ARE AT ODDS WITH THE VILTRUM EMPIRE. A GREAT POWER STRUGGLE IS BREWING IN THE FARTHEST REACHES OF SPACE. THE COALITION IS TRYING TO UNITE ENOUGH WORLDS TO HAVE AN ARMY **POWERFUL** ENOUGH TO **STOP** THE VILTRUMITE EXPANSION THROUGHOUT THE GALAXY.



THE VILTRUMITES ARE SO STRONG INDIVIDUALLY THAT THEY ARE VIRTUALLY **UNSTOPPABLE**. BUT NO ONE HAS EVER HEARD OF A VILTRUMITE ABANDONING HIS **POST** OR ONE THAT **DEFIES** THE EMPIRE **ALTOGETHER**. I MUST BRING THEM THIS NEWS AT **ONCE**.

THIS COULD BE THE **ADVANTAGE** THEY'RE **LOOKING FOR**.



LET ME KNOW IF I CAN DO ANYTHING TO **HELP**. I'M NOT LOOKING FORWARD TO VILTRUM RETURNING TO THIS PLANET TO CLAIM IT AS PART OF THE **EMPIRE**.



WILL DO. I'LL CERTAINLY LET YOU **KNOW** AS SOON AS I HEAR SOMETHING FROM THE COALITION.

IN THE MEANTIME... WHAT ABOUT **YOU?** WITH YOUR FATHER GONE AND ALL THAT'S HAPPENED... WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO **DO?**



FINISH
HIGH
SCHOOL, I
GUESS.